

**“Transformation of Mohiniyattam Tradition in Kerala:
Cultural-milieu, Pedagogy and Practice.”**

A Dissertation submitted to the University of Hyderabad in partial fulfillment of the
award of a Ph.D. degree in the Dept. of Dance

By
Aswathy Rajan
(13SNPD01)

Under the Supervision of
Prof. Anuradha J.



DEPARTMENT OF DANCE
SAROJINI NAIDU SCHOOL OF ARTS & COMMUNICATION
UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD
(P.O.) Central University, Gachibowli
Hyderabad- 500046

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DECLARATION

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Parts of this thesis have been:

A) Published in the following publications:

1. *Dance, Music and Media in the 20th and 21st Centuries (Research Articles)*, 2018 Dept. of Music, Annamalai University, Annamalai (ISBN: 978-81-920060-5-5-), “Dance Pedagogy in the Digital age: Changing contours of Traditions,” Chapter I.
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Supervisor
Prof. Anuradha J.
Dept. of Dance

Head of Department
Prof. Aruna Bhikshu
Dept. of Dance

Dean of SN School
Prof. P Thirumal

Dedicated to

My Parents

Leena Rajan & K K Rajan

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13SNPD01

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Translation and Transliteration

Essentially, the vernacular language, *Malayalam* and the regional poetic language, *Manipravalam* has been employed for this study. Translations of certain texts and quotes of *Malayalam* and *Manipravalam* languages has been carried out by the researcher in her own language. The researcher doesn't use the diacritical mark for transliterating the vernacular words and idioms rather, a simplest method is adapted here for transliterations, which is detailed below with proper examples.

Capital letter of the alphabet is used for stressing both the vowels and the consonants of vernacular languages. For instance, the *Malayalam* word 'ഭാരതം' (*Bhaaratam*) consists of letters such as ഭ അ ര ത മ ('bha' 'a' 'ra' 'ta' 'am') which can be written as 'bhAratam'. Thus, instead of giving 'aa', the stress of the vowel is expressed with 'A' (the capital letter of the same). Certain letters ശ ഷ have been written with similar marks. It could be read correctly according to the context of the text.

അ	ആ	ഇ	ഈ	ഉ	ഊ	ഋ
a	A	i	I	u	U	r
എ	ഏ	ഐ	ഒ	ഓ	ഔ	
e	E	ai	o	O	au	
അം	അഃ					
am	ah					
ക	ഖ	ഗ	ഘ	ങ		
ka	kha	ga	gha	nga		
ച	ഛ	ജ	ഝ	ഞ		
ca	cha	ja	jha	nja		
ട	ഠ	ഡ	ഢ	ണ		
ta	Ta	da	Da	Na		
ത	ഥ	ദ	ധ	ന		
ta	tha	da	dha	na		
പ	ഫ	ബ	ഭ	മ		
pa	pha	ba	bha	ma		
യ	ര	ല	വ			
ya	ra	la	va			
ശ	ഷ	സ	ഹ	ള	റ	ഴ
sha	sha	sa	ha	La	Ra	zha
ക	ച	ട	ത്ത	പ		
Ka	Ca	Ta	Tta	Pa		

PREFACE

Art is the core-essence of culture. It is the human expression of the different phases of life. Every unique form of art has its own existence in accordance with the culture in which it is being rooted and nurtured. There is a permanent bridge that ties art and culture together. Both of these entities develop through different kinds of phenomenon like reactions and reflections of the social milieu of human life.

This thesis explores different perspectives, concerning the origin and the development of the dance form, *Mohiniyattam*. *Mohiniyattam*, a female dancing form was originated and developed in the state of Kerala during the medieval period (Approximately in 17th-19th Centuries). Although, the emergence and the growth of this dance form is similar to the performing-art traditions of the neighboring states, the focal character of this form remained as a sheer product of the socio-cultural history of the land. As this art form being a complete expression of femininity, it has uncut-roots to the history of the womanhood of Kerala. Interestingly, the art form had also been a tool, employed in the oppression and the pain, experienced by the native females of the medieval era. One can comprehend the ancestry and the soul of this art form only through reading and contextualizing it with the history of the female- lives of the region.

The gender crisis of woman is a global phenomenon that doesn't bifurcate between cities, nations and continents. India is no exception, the attitude of the society towards women has been moulded from the mixed concerns of the '*Smrithi*' and the *Victorian morality*. Looking from the present point, the history of the lives of women in Kerala could be felt as bizarre and disturbing. As much as the caste depressions prevailed in this land, the sex discrimination and oppression were also at its peak, during those medieval times. There were different customs and practices that had affected the lives of women which were associated with different facets of life such as marriages, sexual-relationships and so on. The respective art form was also a practice of such kind which domesticated and objectified women during that point of history.

Hence, the discussion on native lives of women was an inevitable aspect pertaining to this study. The initial chapter opens up unfolding the cultural backdrop of Kerala in order to accelerate a lucid understanding upon the existence of this female-centric art form in a scrupulous manner. As a whole, this study is a humble attempt to perceive the history and the development of *Mohiniyattam*, concerning its socio-cultural existence and social relevance. It proposes several models for strengthening the performative and the pedagogic ideas of the form, considering its social character and significance.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Dance had not been regarded as a subject of serious concern in the scholarly field until recent times. However, a move to develop dance as a major discipline in the world intelligentsia is on raise. Owing to the growing interest in the field, some of the universities in India have also introduced dance as a new discipline in their various academic programmes. Examining the chronicles of the dancing of yore, it may be observed that, it was once treated with utmost respect and had a primary role in the construction of the social life. The move behind *downgrading dance*¹ from the social construct of human life was not natural, but discourse-affiliated². It was part of implementing a new ideology³ into the social realm (which would be discussed in detail further). Furthermore, in India, the colonial rule reinforced this ideology in the social milieu of the country which subsequently affected and influenced the development and make-shifts of the performing art traditions of India.

Owing to the plurality of cultures, art traditions of India are richer and deep-rooted. Moreover, they have been mirrors of the society that absorb and replicate the shifts and paradigms of social movements of each age.⁴ India is not secluded from other cultures and domains of the world, but to some extent, it could prevent the cultural invasions and dominations of foreigners and preserve its distinctive identity. A similar trend has been observed in the context of Kerala. Hence it could carry forward and develop the streams of knowledge true to its own ethos, to an extent un-diffused. 'Un-diffused', in this context implies, a manner of practicing a tradition in a non-hybridized fashion. The critical scrutiny of the events of the past, grants us a record on how a tradition or a system of practice grows and matures through the time. Nevertheless, different episodes of movements have been involved in its evolution.

¹ 'Downgrading dance' is a reflective phenomenon of downgrading women lives and objectifying and sensitising her body and living.

² "In every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality." (Michel Foucault, 1981).

³ "This ideology is powerful and pervasive and frequently not recognized so that the dominant world view is assumed to be 'common sense' apolitical and beyond challenge" (Adair, 1992:12)

⁴ Social movement influences art, music, literature and other entities of the society. Thus, the products of these entities carry the characteristics of the particular movement and certain political ideas of the same.

The following figure illustrates is a graphical representation of the process of cultural growth and evolution. Although the manifestation of the process may be different, this pattern resonates with many other diverse traditions of the world.

Cultural Growth-Process Mapping; A Graphical Representation

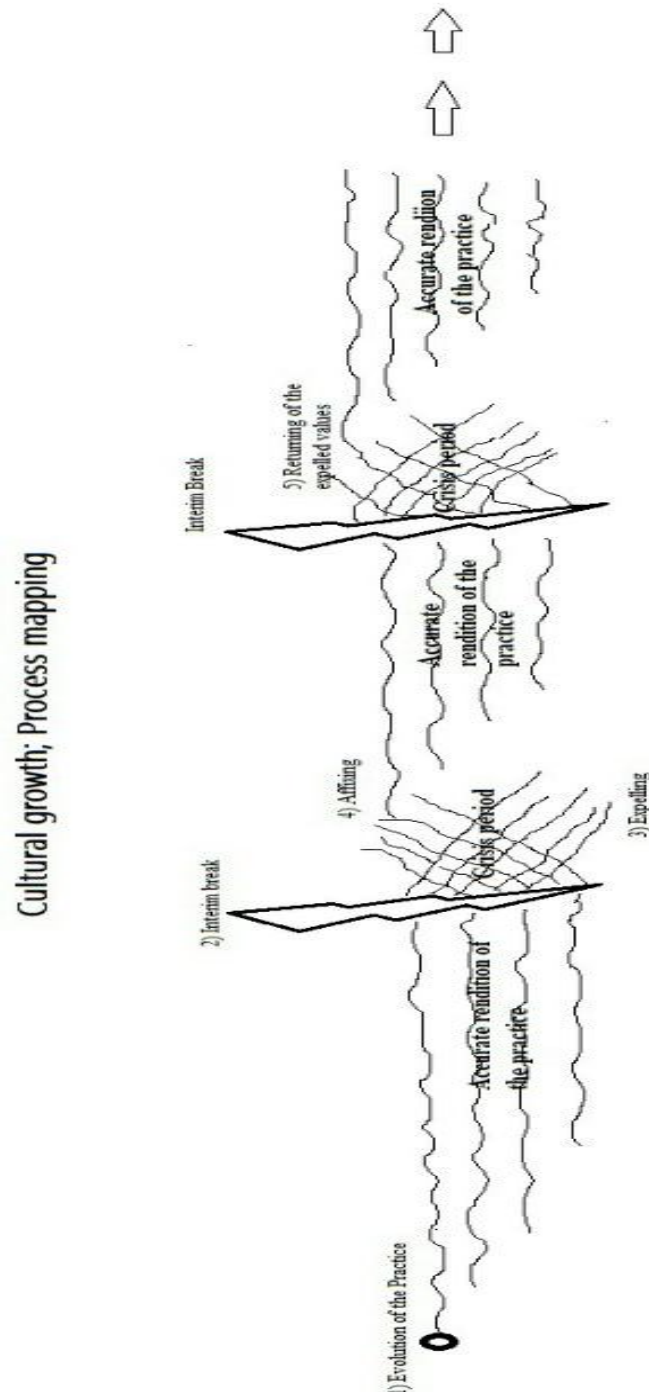


Plate: 1.1

[Diagram 1.1 Note: The Circle indicates the evolution of certain practice or custom at a certain period of time. The first wave indicates the people who follow the custom initially. The second line shows more number of people adapting the practice. The more the layers of waves, the more it gets vibrated. An interim break can attack the flow of the custom as a

social change or cause. The crossed wings exhibit the crisis period of the custom. During this period, lot of vulnerabilities can affect the practice of the custom. Eventually the custom survives through changing its cords expelling the inappropriate aspects and affixing new values. This is a continues process in the development of any culture and tradition.]

A system of practice emerges at a certain point as part of the rites of passage⁵ of human life. Gradually, it is practiced by a particular group of people and eventually the number of performers and participants increases in accordance with the exercise of the custom. A diverse range of functions take place at various junctures during the development of the custom. Evolution of the custom is the primary phenomenon in the development of the custom. From this point the emerged custom begins to be practised on a regular basis. Either the influence of other dominant cultures prevalent in the particular region of the practice or some disastrous fall of the culture could create a rupture in the flow of the custom being practised. This phase could be termed as the crisis period in the development of the custom. This phase could also be the result of an ideological confusion among the performers and participants of the custom. Here, the participants and the performers either expel or accept values and rites related to the custom. Some customs that could not withstand this phase of crisis fade into oblivion. After the interim break, the custom becomes alive again among its true inheritors. Sometimes an expelled rite could be reinstated in the format of the custom as part of its renewal process. The custom could also be manipulated and modified in their own ways by other clans or groups of the society. This phase indicates the popularization of the custom and its reach to wider practitioners. For instance, the art of *Mohiniyattam* has also been emerged and developed in this fashion where different social circumstances and ideologies together produced various contexts and meanings. The diagram of ‘five phases of development of *Mohiniyattam*’ (which appears in the second section of the fifth chapter) illuminates one’s understanding of how the above discussed phenomenon took place in *Mohiniyattam* in detail. Before delving into the history of *Mohiniyattam*, it is imperative to look at the cultural history of Kerala and the female lives of the land, as the study centres on the female dancing tradition. Cultural norms attached to the female lives are discussed below.

⁵Rites of passage- land marking ceremonies associated with the development of social life of humans. (Victor Turner, 1995)

Female lives in Kerala through the ages

The era of '*Upanishad*' (a sub-genre of the four Vedas) was the golden age for the women in India. Gargi, Maitreyi, Khosha, Lopamudra, Mamata, Surya, Indrani, Viswapasa and Vadhramati were such gems of women to work with the then governing bodies and scholastic chairs of the society. Women of the Vedic period had been inducted into *Upanayana*⁶ and other illustrious rites (R Radhakrishnan, 2012:7). They were even eligible for reciting and learning the Vedas during that period, hence they could further involve themselves in deliberate discussions with the male scholars of higher rank in the society (T K D Muzhupilangad, 2001:53). The rise of the Brahmin dominance and the caste system narrowed down the lives of the women to the state of domesticity (R Radhakrishnan, 2012:8). The stature of women in Kerala was not much disparate from the other regions of the country. Life of woman was apparently easy during the *Sangam* epoch. They enjoyed a liberal status as they were educated and treated with respect in the society. Chronicles about *Avvayar*⁷ reveals the social stature of the women during the *Sangam* epoch. However, different discursive exchanges and shifting set of ideologies, influenced and changed the life of the female gender of this land to a great extent.

Kerala was called, "*Pennarasunadu*" (J Devika, 2000:29) the country, that was being ruled by women, two centuries ago. One cannot think of such a coinage in the present social scenario, if intimated with the stories of the subaltern ordeals of the past. Yet the term mentioned must have evolved out of some kind of liberal status enjoyed solely by women of certain communities. Not all of them had this kind of emancipation; "*the lower the caste, the bitterer were its sufferings of slavery and bondage*" (M M Kochuthresia, 1994:95).

"During the pre-independence period the present Kerala state consisted of three distinct political entities, viz. Malabar as part of the then Madras Presidency and the two princely States of Cochin and Travancore" (Ibid, 1994:95). By that time, the Caste system and the Brahmin dominance had been gaining firm foothold in the state. All castes and creeds of the state were not included in the *Varna* system as among the

⁶Rites of passage of Brahmin community. It is performed only for male members of the community. It is an initiation ceremony.

⁷*Avvayar*- The title, given to the poetesses of Sangam epoch. There are three poetesses of Sangam, known in this title.

four *Varnas*, two of them were partially absent in the whole population of Kerala.⁸ Values and beliefs varied in accordance with the communities. When a Brahmin born girl was not even able to mingle casually with the opposite sex, “the Nair women enjoyed a large degree of social freedom” (Ibid, 1994:100). A glaring contradiction in the social practices was that, while *Nambudiri* men indulged in a loose life pattern, rigid restrictions were imposed on women, their intelligence, free thinking and independence (E K Swarnakumari, 2001:35). While the Brahmins followed the patrilineal tradition⁹ the other castes emulated *Matrilineality*¹⁰. Thus, the hereditary properties had been passed on to the elder sons in the Brahmin community whereas in the other clans, it was inherited through women. Land ownership patterns were also different in the state as there was no private property ownership until the time of British Rule. Initiation of *Alohari* (private property ownership) in the land control and land ownership policy¹¹ changed the familial system from joint to single.

⁸“The varna system which was prevalent in all other Indian village societies had never existed in Kerala in the same pattern. There are no such groups of people in Kerala which include themselves perfectly in the four-fold division of *Brahmana*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaisya* and *Sudra*. If there is any section of people in Kerala which fully satisfies the concept of Varna division, it is Brahmins. Originally there is not separate section of people in Kerala which practiced the *varna dharma* of *Kshatriya* and *Sudras*.” (Kerala State Gazetteer, 1999: 7, 8)

⁹Everything regarding the family setup is run by elder male members of the family. Property management and its ownership is attributed to only male members. Malayalam term of this system is *Makkathayam*.

¹⁰ a) “Matriliny of Kerala was known by the name *Marumakkattayam*. The term came from *marumakkal* – nephews and nieces. The word has been coined due to the unusual relationship between uncle and his nephews and nieces. This peculiar system is built upon women. It gave protection to women compared to their counterparts in patrilineal families. Women were the stock of the land title and it was through her that the *Tarawad* name was transmitted from one generation to another. She had a birth right over *Tarawad* property and this lasted throughout her life. The Nair women and their children lived in the *Tarawad* – matrilineal household – itself.” (Moothedath Mayadevi, 2015:8)

b) “Women under matriliney had a comparatively high status vs. under patriliney (Saradamoni 1999, D. Renjini, 1998). First, women’s strong, inalienable rights in their natal *Taravadu* (matrilineal / matrilocal household) ensured lifelong security and shelter for old women, young girls, etc. In this polyandrous system, remarriage of widows and divorcees was permitted, and women had considerable rights to terminate unsatisfactory marital relationships” (S. Sudha, S. Khanna, S. IrudayaRajan, Roma Srivastava MS, 2005:8).

¹¹Land control and land ownership- “The traditional agrarian structure was based on a three-tier relationship between *Janmis* (land lords), *kanakkar* (tenants) and *verumpattakkar* (sub-tenants). Most of the land was controlled by the *Nambudiris* as *janmam* or as *devaswam* (temple lands) and by a few Nair chieftains, mainly in north Malabar. The *Nambudiris* did not undertake cultivation and also, unlike the Brahmins in other parts of the country, did not enter into secular vocations like administration, account-keeping and so on. They lived on the rent received from their tenants, mostly *Nairs*, to whom they leased out or mortgaged their lands. Most of the *Nairs*, who were military retainers of feudal chieftains, also did not cultivate on their own. They sub-leased the lands to Nairs of inferior economic position, to untouchable castes like *Tiyyasor* to *Mappilas*, extracting obviously, a higher rent from them. William Logan was of the opinion that *Nair Kanakkar* were initially nothing but a protector guild and that they claimed a part of the produce in their capacity of protectors of supervisors. The customarily enforceable three-tier hierarchical relationship crystalized only during the post- fifteenth century period under the immediate impact of money economy and greater occupational mobility. If

Women from all clans and groups except *Nambudiri* had to struggle with sexual slavery on the grounds of the caste hierarchy. Beautiful young women of lower castes could not keep their virginity until their marriage as before or after they had to submit themselves to the landlord under whom they earned a living.¹²

“In the beginning of the twelfth century, almost the entire land of Kerala had come under the control of the *Nampudiris*. The process by which they came to occupy this dominant position is linked with the nature of temple administration and control of temple property¹³. In Kerala, as in other parts of South India, temples were the centres of social life. They fulfilled the role of today’s schools, reading rooms, religious centres, cinema houses, theatre, parks, and even brothels” (Elamkulam Kunhan Pillai, 1970: 332; K N Panikkar, 2016: 185).

Untouchability and other prejudiced customs in Kerala

*Untouchability*¹⁴ and *Pollution*¹⁵ was the most in-human ideology that the Brahmin dominated society of Kerala did up-hold (Charles Allen, 2017). “The traditional approaches to the caste-body phenomena tend to conceptualise the issue within the confines of a well-knit cause and effect paradigm. Therefore, caste is usually deployed as the pre-determinant, that which regulates and orders out the behavioural practices and everyday actions of the body into fixed and regimented categories. Here the body is represented as a *tabula rasa* or a grid of invisibility on which the legible and visible codes of the caste are inscribed. Biologically speaking, the body is conceived as a passive recipient or receptacle subject to the domestic and non-domestic inseminations made by the caste” (Sheeju N V, 2011: 123). The practice of *un-touchability* was held in connection with the hierarchical structure of the caste system of the society. Members of the higher caste objectified and reduced the lives of the other clans merely to the value of machines that supported their living. And this

Logan’s opinion about the *Kanakkar* is true, the distribution of surplus was based on the principle of mutual dependence within the frame work of feudal exploitation” (K N Panikkar, 2016: 192, 193).

¹²“Elamkulam Kunhan Pillai, the well-known social historian, writes that “*the woman who does not yield to the wishes of the man of the same or superior caste is immoral and is to be put to death immediately.*” There might be a bit of exaggeration in such a statement but this is indicative of the status of women compared to that of man” (M M, Kochuthresia: 1994: 104).

¹³The temple property was administrated by *Sabhas* or committees consisting, in all probability, of Brahmins and the representatives of *Karalar* (tenants of the temple lands)

¹⁴“The most notable characteristic of the caste system in Kerala is the practice of Untouchability which figures even the upper castes as untouchables. Usually the Brahmins elsewhere in India do not observe untouchability except towards castes outside the varnas, yet in Kerala the Brahmins observe a form of Untouchability towards the caste even inside the Varna system” (Kerala State Gazetteer, 1999: 8).

¹⁵*Ashudham*. When an upper caste body is touched or come in contact with the lower caste, *Ashudham* is announced. The polluted upper caste person can re-enter to their clan only after purifying his body with Hindu holy rites ‘*Shudham Varuthal*’.

physical support and submissiveness paid by the lower castes to the higher ones was not a logical outcome, but earned by the power of supremacy.

Smartha Vicharam,¹⁶ was another bizarre praxis which was prevalent among the *Nambudiri* Brahmins of Kerala. This custom was practised to supervise and control the lives of *Antharjanams* (people who live inside) of Brahmin families. Their morality and chastity had been regulated through this praxis. As E K Swarnakumari quotes K C Narayanan in her thesis, “this is a trial of a *Nambudiri* Woman suspected of adultery. This was conducted even on a light suspicion” (E K Swarnakumari, 2001:39). The term *Smartha* implies the knowledge about *Smrithis* (a genre of Hindu Holy Scripture majorly deals with Hindu law). These patriarchal concepts which objectify the lives of women in India evolved out of *Smrithis*. *Smartha Vicharam* is one of such rituals emerged out of *Smrithis* (Kurup,1988; Shaji, 2017; Sreedhara Menon, 1986).

Sambandham is a partial-marriage system that connects *Nambudiri* and *Nair* families. It has a close association with the earlier praxis of *Mohiniyattam*. Though the *Nair* perceived it as a real marriage, it was primarily a casual alliance. The woman engaged with this praxis had no right to earn a living from her husband. Even the children born out of this relation were kept away from their father. If the father had come in tactile with the children, he would then be considered as polluted and further he was forbidden from entering his house until the spiritual bath ‘*Shudham*’ was performed. Usually *Aphans*¹⁷ of Brahmin families used to engage in this system as they had no opportunity to marry a girl from within their community. Only elder sons married *Nambudiri* women. Still they had the privilege to make any number of *Sambandhams* they wished to. Elder ones of *Nambudiri* families were even allowed to have more wives from their own community. Most of the *Nambudiri* women lived throughout their lives unmarried due to the unavailability of elder sons (Puthenkalam,1977; Balakrishnan,1981; Charles Allen, 2017). Another tactic

¹⁶“The *Nambudiri* woman if suspected of adultery was questioned and her *dasis* or *vrishalis* interrogated. At this stage, if the suspicion was confirmed, the *Antharjanam* or *Sadhanam* was kept under custody. Thus, the first stage was called *Dasivicharam*. Next is *Smarthavicharam*. A committee consisting of a *smartha*, are presentative of the area called *Akakkovil*, *Purakkovil* or the king or his representative, two *meemamsakas* or juries conduct the *Smartha Vicharam*. *Sadhanam* was kept away from her kith and kin to a lonely place and questioned till the evidences of adultery found” (E K Swarna Kumari, 2001:39,40).

¹⁷Younger sons of Brahmin families were called *Aphan*. *Aphan* had no right on the family properties.

ideology that had been practised to keep their property intact, was convincing the other clans that attaining or receiving the *Brahmaswam*¹⁸ was one of the greatest sins that the other classes could do.¹⁹ Thus, most of the times *Sambandham* had just been another way of pleasure-seeking of dominant males just like the casual sexual encounters of the present day such as ‘one-night-stand’, no-strings-attached relationships²⁰ and so on.

“One humiliating kind of tax that existed in certain parts of Kerala during the last century was the *Mulakkaram* (breast tax) (Krishna Iyer, 1995; Charles Allen, 2017). Young women aged between 16 and 35 belonging to such very low caste groups had to pay this tax” (Kochuthresia, 1994:111). “The size of woman breasts decided the amount of payment” (Garodia Guptha, 2019). Among all these unfair practices, a tradition of women dancing culture had also been prevalent in some regions of Kerala. This women-dancing tradition came into existence in this land by cutting across its span from the neighbouring states of the land.²¹

Devadasis

‘*Devadasis*’ was a system of Sacred Prostitution prevalent in most of the parts of ancient India (Vijaisri, 2004; Shingal, 2015). However, the term has broader dimensions as their charismatic practices had played a seminal role in enriching the tradition. They were initially accorded elite status in the society. Sometimes, *Devadasis* were even included from the priest’s community. They were learned

¹⁸The property owned by Brahmins.

¹⁹“There are many versions of ‘*Keralolpatti*’ but the stem idea is same for all of them. There are three cardinal parts of the story. First part is the formation of the land and placement of Brahmins over there. Second part is in praise of Perumal rule and the final part is dedicated to the feudal rulers who were succeeded from the *Perumals*. The initial two parts of *Keralolpatti* emphasise that the land is entirely owned to Brahmins. It stresses that Brahmins have no obligation to anyone for their land-ownership. *Keralolpatti* stories are nothing but the sense of history of people who kept great importance about (had immense possessions about) land ownership and land control” (Raghava Warriar & Rajan Gurukkal, 1992:12,13).

²⁰Casual non-permanent sexual relations with no dignity received.

²¹“It is characteristic of Indian classical traditions that a movement, form or style, originating in one part of India at a given historical period, finds its finest and mature flowering in a totally different distant part” Kapila Vatsyayan, 1980:15). Even Dr. Kapil Vatsyayan made this point in connection with the history of the Sanskrit drama *Koodiyattam*. This point also has relevance here. And not only in India, this phenomenon was ever occurable in the cultural contexts of every dynamic society. She also argues that “an analysis of the traditions of *Kathakali* and *Koodiyattam* reveals that while the final resultant form is certainly regional in character, the origins have to be traced back to sources outside Kerala.” But this could only be a prejudiced perspective. Emergence of such traditions could not be recorded at one point of time and one point of space. Traditions grow through cultural give and takes.

people who enjoyed privileged status²² in the society. Treatises of *Kama Sastra* divided women into four folds: *Patmini*, *Chithrini*, *Shankhini* and *Hashtini*. Among them the first two folds, *Patmini* and *Chithrini*²³ alone had the opportunity to become Devadasis. “Sudras were denied access to the knowledge system but if a girl of such community joins the clan of Devadasis, they will thus be able to acquire the knowledge of Vedic scriptures along with eighteen and more languages. Treatises about the *Kavya-Nataka-Sastra*²⁴ were taught to them in detail. Over a period of time Devadasis began to be conceived as women who gave pleasure to the men of upper caste” (T KD Muzhupilangad, 2001:36). *Devadasis* is not a secluded tradition that is found only in India, it is found in many ancient countries of the world in different names and cultures. And in Kerala, the corresponding term was *Thevadichi* / *Thevadissi*.

If elsewhere in the world it was the holy scripture of Christianity, here in our land it was *Smrithi* which regulated the society through the construction of moral norms that laid down restrictions on the lives of women. It constructed the noble and wayward women dichotomy in the society. The society required the so-called wayward women to seek pleasure. Not yielding themselves to the sexual needs of the high-class men was even considered a crime for low caste women in the society at that time. The moral values upheld by the religious scriptures are often biased towards men to keep the male-interests safe. The practices that had happened in the name of ‘*Witchcraft*’²⁵ in the West²⁶ has happened here too. Behind the degradation of

²²“One of the greatest advantages of the *Devadasis* was that they could never be widowed. (Orchad, 2007) This allowed them a higher status than most other women, as being widowed can lead to the loss of everything. This may be one of the reasons that the *Devadasis* were seen as ranked higher than most other women in social status” (Shodganga, Devadasi practice and status of Devadasis, 2009:41).

²³ a) *Patmini*- “Padmini is a woman beautiful in appearance and complexion of golden hue. She has less of arrogance, anger, and desire for love making” (Kanu Priya Rathore, 2015).

b) *Chithrini*- “She has a slender shell-like neck and a tender body with lean and slim waist like a lion and hard and full breast. As her name suggests she is an artistic woman who has a liking for dance, music and poetry.” (Ibid.)

²⁴ Literature, Drama and Science

²⁵Witch craft- Practice of magic to heal or harm others. Today most of us presume the image of a witch is nothing but a slender old woman, covered in black cloth, having sharp and unpleasant facial features, holding a broom stick of evil magical spells.

²⁶“The first thing to be clear about is that it was Christianity who condemned the word ‘witch’; otherwise, it was one of the most respected words, as respected as ‘mystic’ – a wise man. It simply meant a wise woman, the parallel to a wise man. But in the Middle Ages, Christianity came to face a danger. There were thousands of women who were far wiser than the bishops and the cardinals and the pope. They knew the art of transforming people’s lives. Their whole philosophy was based on love and transformation of sexual energy – and a woman can do that more easily than a man. After all, she is a mother and she is always a mother. Even a small baby girl has the quality of motherliness. The quality of

Witchcraft in the West and *Devadasis* in India, there is a deliberate manipulation of the practice using power and patriarchal hegemony. Only through the re-reading and logical understanding of the past events, one can interpret the traits of history in an objective fashion. Not all the written accounts of history are reliable. Many of them represent 'his story' rather than that of the people. This was the European (Aryan) approach of history that continued and still continues in our country where the episodes of heroes of great privileges appear as the prime focus and the peripheral (minor) characters who are relegated to the margins get faded and patterned or manipulated favouring the major focus. The content of history could then be manipulated into different context, thus, the actual meaning of the content could be lost.²⁷ It was through the same discourse, the *Thevadissi* began to attain an offensive dimension and was used to imply the wayward women in the societal set up.²⁸

Mohiniyattam as a following tradition of *Thevadissi Attam*, has been also evolved out of these kinds of ideological wars and contradictions of the society.

The nationalistic spirit: reinstating the indigenous values

It is impossible deny the fact that the institutionalization of Indian art forms had emerged out of the *Swadeshi Prasthan* of Indian independence movement. This

motherliness is not something connected with age, it is part of womanhood. And the transformation needs a very loving atmosphere, a very motherly transfer of energies. To Christianity, it was a competitor. Christianity has nothing to offer in comparison to it – but Christianity was in power. It was a man's world up to then; and they decided to destroy all witches. But how to destroy them? It was not a question of killing one woman but thousands of women. So, a special court was created for enquiry, to find out who was a witch. Any woman said by Christians to have had an influence on people and who people respected was caught and tortured – so much so, that she had to confess. They wouldn't stop torturing her until she confessed that she was a witch" (Osho, 1989).

²⁷ It was D D Kosambi, the great historian and scholar who came up with the wave of ethics and transparency in the field of the study of Indian history. In the preface of his book "An introduction to the study of Indian History" he expresses that "this book does not pretend to be a history of India. It is merely a modern approach to the study of Indian history, written in the hope that readers may be impelled to study that history for themselves." He states his objective as "to maintain that history has always been made by such backward, ignorant, common people, and that they not the high priest, glittering autocrat, war-world financier, or demagogue, must shape it better in future, seems presumptuous formalism. Nevertheless, it is true. The proper study of history in a class society means analysis of the differences between the interests of the classes on top and of the rest. "of the people; it means consideration of the extent to which an emergent class had something new to contribute during its rise to power, and of the stage where it turned (or will turn) to reaction in order to preserve its vested interests" (D DKosambi, 1975:1).

²⁸ It was from 12th century onwards that the institution of Devadasis lost its old respectability. The leisurely class of Brahmins who also emerged as the landowning class became attracted to this class of women and exercised a corrupting influence on them. They were joined by the *Naduvazhis* of whom there was a large number during the period following the breakup of the *Chera* Empire. It became a fashion with the upper caste Nambutiris to patronize the Devadasis by bestowing favours on them for the sake of female companionship and sexual gratification (Sreedhara Menon, 1987:77).

movement befell the various art forms at different centres of the country, simultaneously. It is appropriate to quote Sunil Kothari's (2012) note on the same here:

“In the late 1920s, Indian dance made a mark on both national and international fronts. Through the efforts of pioneers like Uday Shankar, Indian dance and Indian heritage was unearthed by the world. Indian classical dance did exist in the temples as a part of ritual worship and in the princely courts where dancers performed for the patrons. As a reaction to the British rule, the intelligentsia seeking national identity, revived the indigenous arts. As awareness about Indian dance traditions proliferated, some of the pioneers established institutions for training. Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) introduced Manipuri and Kathakali in *Santiniketan* in the 1920s and 1930s; Poet Vallathol Narayan Menon established the *KeralaKalamandalam* in 1930 in Cheruthuroothi, Kerala for Kathakali; Rukmini Devi (1904-86) established *Kalakshetra* in Chennai in 1936 for Bharatanatyam; Uday Shankar (1900-77) established the Uday Shankar Cultural Centre in Almora in 1939; Madame Menaka (1899-1947) established *Nrityalayam* at Khandala near Mumbai in 1941 and made arrangements for training in Kathak and other classical dance forms. These all were free individuals with modern sensibilities, who had realized the importance and value of Indian classical dance forms and why they should be preserved” (Sunil Kothary, 2012:15)

The above-mentioned facts add depth to our understanding of how the institutionalization in performing art forms took place extensively in our nation. In the present context of the study, the institutionalization of the native art forms is given prime importance as it was only through this phenomenon, the currently discussed dance form, *Mohiniyattam* was resuscitated to its present stature. Yet, one needs to rethink about the questions and issues that lay at the centre of the phenomenon, more specifically- how did it happen? Solving this ‘how’ will make one fathom the undercurrent meanings of the phenomenon. This aspect is discussed in detail in the second section of the fifth chapter of the thesis. However, it was a boon or release from the curse for the art form *Mohiniyattam* to re-enter the terrain of art.

Section -II

Building up a shelter along with a livelihood was an urgency in the case of *Mohiniyattam* during the period of twentieth century. Mahakavi Vallathol Narayana Menon²⁹ could perfectly make it possible by adopting the art form into his art abode. It was completely a tedious job to re-invoke a dead spirit from the tomb. *Mohiniyattam*

²⁹Vallathol Narayana Menon attained the title of *Mahakavi* after authoring *Chitrayogam* in 1914.

was almost dead when *Mahakavi* went on in search of the art form. However, it is because of his passion towards the mother-land and its soil that we are able to experience what *Mohiniyattam* is at present. This research intends to bring out the growth of the pedagogy of the art form, *Mohiniyattam*, scrutinising the inside and the outside perceptions³⁰ of the same to get a crystal view, out of the cultural complications tied up with it. It is a feminine art form bearing the imprints of diverse cultures; hence the study opens up here with a detailed portrayal of the cultural scenario of Kerala through the ages.

“The present day *Mohiniyattam* has evolved from the regional variation of *Dasiyattam* which was prevalent in South India. This regional variation of *Dasiyattam* was known as *Avinayakoothu*. From *Avinayakoothu* to *Mohiniyattam*; it might have been a long process of evolution involving addition, elimination and experimentation” Kerala State Gazetteer, 1999:116). *Koothachi* (during the 1st Chera rule), *Thevadissi* (during 8th century A D) *Dasi* and *Mohini* (1700) are the terms associated with the feminine dance tradition of this land through ages.

Statement of the Problem

The study is entitled, “*Transformation of Mohiniyattam tradition in Kerala: Cultural milieu, Pedagogy and Practice.*”

“**Transformation** is a marked change in form, nature or appearance” (Google Dictionary, 2018) In the current study, the application of the term transformation pertains to the development and change of the performing art form, *Mohiniyattam* in the realm of its performativity, pedagogy and social-image. ***Mohiniyattam*** is one of the seminal performing art traditions of Kerala. This feminine form of art was recognized as the eighth Indian classical dance by *Sangit Nataka Akademi*. Major element of this art form is *lasya*³¹(as conceived by the dancers) which symbolises its finesse.

The transformation of *Mohiniyattam* has been a huge and ongoing process that originated from a point where no written account of history was found. In the present

³⁰ Inside and outside perceptions- Understanding the phenomenon within the frame of it or being the participant of the same is what the ‘inside perception’. Grasping the phenomenon from the outsider point of view by correlating similar ideas with a multi-disciplinary approach.

³¹ *Lasya*- a category of pure dance as defined by *Natyasastra*. Soft and subtle feminine movements.

thesis, the process of transformation is perceived and analysed through different dimensions of the art form from ranging from its relation with the community to the existence of the form as a socialised entity.

The frame of the present thesis circumscribes the *cultural milieu* of the art form where the art form right from its origin, in order to understand the existence and social relevance of the art form. The present chapter delves into the cultural back drop of the land particularly the lives of women in past, as the art form has been solely performed by females in both matrilineal and patriarchal society.

“**Pedagogy** as defined by the Collins English Dictionary, is the study and theory of the methods and principles of teaching” (Collins dictionary, 2019). The academic term touches upon four entities- teacher, learner, text and context. It is a scientific and systematic study concerning the philosophy of teaching and training. Various aspects like curriculum-designing, syllabi and module making fall under this umbrella term. A pedagogical study systematically and scientifically approaches a teaching methodology in accordance with the learning objectives of the training or the teaching under scrutiny. The present study delves into the nuances and intricacies of *Mohiniyattam pedagogy* and its development through different frames of cultures such as *Gurukula* system (residential learning system) and institutionalization. This study probes the status of pedagogy from the *Kalari* (practice room) to its academic pursuit in institutions.

“**Practice** is the actual application or use of an idea, belief, or method, as opposed to theories relating to it. The customary, habitual, or expected procedure or way of doing of something / repeated exercise in or performance of an activity or skill so as to acquire or maintain proficiency in it” (Oxford Dictionary, 2019). In the present context, the term practice indicates the cultural performance of the art form *Mohiniyattam*. The performative, pedagogic and academic practices of *Mohiniyattam* is one of the thrust areas of study.

Survey of Literature

Present thesis encompasses the following major areas of study-the historical background of the art form including the cultural formation of the land with a focus on the lives of women, dance pedagogy and its theoretical applications, *Attaprakaram* or the teaching manuals of the art form. Thus, the Literature survey of the study

ranges from the *Sangam* literature to the recently published books and articles on the area like '*Keralathinte Sthreeshakthicharithram*'³².

Although a few research endeavours on the development of this art form have been undertaken, earlier no literature has touched upon the nuances and the intricacies of *Mohiniyattam pedagogy* in particular. A considerable body of literature by veteran gurus of *Mohiniyattam* are beneficial in gathering data about the lore and the bygone times of the art form. In addition, autobiographies of gurus³³ benefits the contemporary society to revisit the times they lived in and understand the training they underwent and the pedagogy they followed. A large number of existing studies undertaken by reputed scholars which focus on the history and cultural evolution of Kerala provide vital information about the feminine dance culture of the Kerala.

The following are the thrust ideas of major works related to this research area which are discussed under different sub heads.

The earliest sources centre on the evolution and growth of *Mohiniyattam*. The first book published on *Mohiniyattam* was written by Kalamandalam Kalyanikuttyamma under the same title³⁴. The second book³⁵ she authored offers detailed account of the Devadasi lives in Kerala. She surveys sculptural and empirical evidences concerning the same from the temples of Kerala; *Chirakkal* to *Sucheendram*. The book brings out many unheard historical pages regarding *Mohiniyattam*, as heard and understood by the guru. The work being the first of its kind, does not have the material to withstand the *triangular scrutiny*.³⁶

The later contributions in the field by Nirmala Panikker prove to be authentic and well researched. The historical data she puts forth in her works seem to be very

³²Radhakrishnan, R. (2012). *Keralathile NavodhanaSamarangal. (The RenaissanceMovements of Kerala)*. (Malayalam).Trivandrum: Malu Ben Publications.

³³ a) Menon, K.P S. (1989). *Biography of PattikamthodiRavunni Menon* (Malayalam). Cheruthuruthy: Kerala Kalamandalam.

b) Ramankutty Nair, Kalamandalam. (1992). *Thiranottam*. (Malayalam). Thrissur: Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi.

³⁴Kalyanikuttyamma, Kalamandalam. (1978). *Mohiniyattam*. (Malayalam). Kottayam: NBS.

³⁵Kalyanikuttyamma, Kalamandalam. (1992). *Mohiniyattam caritravum attaprakaravum*. (Malayalam). Kottayam: DC Books.

³⁶ This term stands for the Triangulation method. Triangulation is a method used for the research study in Social Sciences. It is a cross verification of the same attribute/fact through two and more measures or sources of ideas.

meticulous and convincing.³⁷ They carry a lucid picture of dancing during the *Chera* rule quoting *Chilappathikaram*, *Pathitru Path* and *Manimekhalai*. Dancing during the *Manipravala* Period also gets special focus in her work. But her works somehow indicate an unrest of the scholarly efforts of *Mahakavi Vallathol* in regard to the institutionalization of the art form.

Among the numerous studies on *Mohiniyattam*, *The art of Mohiniyattam*³⁸ of *Bharathi Shivaji* deserves special mention. Though the first chapter, *The Land of Parasurama* brings out a utopian idea of the land and, the rest of the chapters are helpful in drawing the roots of *Mohiniyattam* in a clear and well-documented manner.

Another book authored by *Kanak Rele* offers a full-fledged account that displays complexities, in its philosophical approaches.³⁹ Touching upon the spiritual and psychological aspects, she puts forth more of a philosophical approach towards history. Sculptural evidences from the ancient temples of Kerala is the thrust area of her study. The text that unveils the research and experiments made by *Kanak Rele* offers a broader perspective of the art form.

*Mohiniyattam: history, theory and practice*⁴⁰ written by *Kalamandalam Sathyabhama* is noteworthy for its documentation of the repertoire of *Kalamandalam* school which she propagated during her life time. The detailed description on the practice of *Varnas*, *Thillanas*, *Padams* and other numbers that she had choreographed epitomises the nuances of *Kalamandalam* style of *Mohiniyattam* whereas *Everything to know about Mohiniyattam*;⁴¹ is a complete guide for *Kalyanikuttyamma School of Mohiniyattam*. Authorship of the book is attributed to *Kala Vijayan*, the daughter disciple of *Kalyanikuttyamma*.

Articles, interviews and performance reviews published in various journals and magazines like *Vidya Vinodini*(1895)⁴², *Bhasha Poshini* (1978), *Samskara Keralam* (1992), *Sruti* (1989), *Keli*(1967) and *Narthanam*, *Mathrubhumi*, *Kala Kaumudi*, *Madhyamam* and Newspapers like *The Hindu*, *Mathrubhumi*

³⁷Panikkar, Nirmala. (2015). *Keralathinte Lasyaperuma*. (Malayalam). Thrissur: Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi.

³⁸ Shivaji, Bharathi. (1986). *The art of Mohiniyattam*. Newdelhi: Lancer International.

³⁹Rele, Kanak. (1992). *Mohiniyattam, The lyrical Dance*. Mumbai: Nalanda Dance Research Centre.

⁴⁰Sathyabhama, Kalamandalam. Mohandas, Lathika. (2014). *Mohiniyattam: Caritram, Sidhantam, Prayogam*. (Malayalam). Kozhikode: Mathrubhumi Books.

⁴¹Vijayan, Kala. (2012). *Mohiniyattam: Ariyendathellam*. (Malayalam). Kottayam: D C Books.

⁴² In brackets, given the approximate year, when the journal first published article on *Mohiniyattam*.

Malayalam daily had been referred extensively for this study. Among them, articles written by Kalamandalam Kalyanikuttyamma⁴³, Nirmala Panikkar⁴⁴, MankuThampuran⁴⁵, ShyamalaSurendran⁴⁶, C P Unnikrishnan, Leela Venkitaraman⁴⁷, K K Gopalakrishnan⁴⁸, Raghavan Payyanad⁴⁹, Chummar Choondal⁵⁰, Leela Omcheri⁵¹, K G M⁵² (an anonymous author) and many others were helpful for understanding various perspectives about the art form.

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- ⁴³ a) Kalyanikuttyamma, Kalamandalam. (1975). *Mohiniyattam*. (Malayalam). Keli. Feb. pp.9-11.
b) Kalyanikuttyamma, Kalamandalam. (1978). *Our Mohiniyatam*. (Malayalam). Keli. Dec-Jan. p.16
c) Kalyanikuttyamma, Kalamandalam. (1978-79). *Mohiniyattam* (Malayalam). Bhashaposhini. Dec-Jan. p.18.
d) Kalyanikuttyamma, Kalamandalam. (1999). *MohiniyattamCharithram*. (Malayalam). KalamandalamThraimasikam. p. 25.
- ⁴⁴ a) Panikkar, Nirmala. (1982). *Tiruvattirakali*. (Malayalam). Keli. Sep-Oct p.29.
b) Panikkar, Nirmala. (1989). *MohiniyattamPazhayaAvasthayum, Punaruddharanavum*. (Malayalam). Keli Special Edition. pp.33-38.
c) Panikkar, Nirmala. (1989). *NatyadharmiyumLokadharmiyum*. (Malayalam). Keli. Vol.5. pp.11-14.
d) Panikkar, Nirmala. (1990). *MohiniyattamAdisthanaPrasnangal*. (Malayalam). Keli. Vol. 12. pp.11-16.
e) Panikkar, Nirmala. (1991). *Mohiniyattam: Abhinayaprakaram*. (Malayalam). Keli. Vol.19 pp.21-26.
f) Panikkar, Nirmala. (1992). *Mohiniyattam: Abhinaya Prakaram*. (Malayalam). Keli. Vol.21. pp.57-60.
g) Panikkar, Nirmala. (1992). *Mohiniyattam: Abhinayaprakaram*. (Malayalam). Keli. Vol.22. pp.19-24.
h) Panikkar, Nirmala. (1995). *Mohiniyattathintethanima*. (Malayalam). Samskarakeralam. July-Sep. P.9-10.
i) Panikkar, Nirmala. (2002). *MohiniyattathileMargiyumDeshgiyum*. (Malayalam). Keli. Vol. 86. pp.13-20.
- ⁴⁵ Thampuran, Manku. (1990). *MohiniyattamOruAnushtana Kala*. (Malayalam). Keli. Vol.12. p.21.
- ⁴⁶ a) Surendran, Shyamala. (1994). *Mohiniyattam during the decade: Rising popularity*. Sruti, May. pp.31-33.
b) Surendran, Shyamala. & Unnikrishnan, C P. (1989). *Interview: Kalamandalam Krishnan Nair*. Sruti. August. p.24
c) Surendran, Shyamala. Unnikrishnan, C P. Jayaraman, P C. (1989). *Mohiniyattam's revival and reform: Kalyanikuttyamma's role*. Sruti. August. pp. 15-24.
d) Surendran, Shyamala. (1989). *Rele's Role: Claims and Rebuttals*. Sruti. August. pp. 25-26.
- ⁴⁷ Vekitaraman, Leela. (1991). *Mohiniyattam at the crossroads: Focus of seminar in Delhi*. Sruti. Jan. p.17.
- ⁴⁸ a) The Hindu, (30 Jan 2014). (K K Gopalakrishnan). *She shaped the art!* Hindu Friday Review.
b) Gopalakrishnan, K K. (1993). *KalamandalamSathyabhama: Outstanding contribution to Mohiniyattam*. Sruti. Summer Bumper Issue. pp. 105-106.
- ⁴⁹ Payyanadu, Raghavan. (1984). *KeralathileParambaryakalakalumSamudayangalum*. (Malayalam). Keli. Aug. P.12.
- ⁵⁰ Choondal, Chummar. (1993). *Mohiniyattathinteputhiyamughangal*. (Malayalam). Keli. Vol.28. pp.63-64.
- ⁵¹ a) Omcheri, Leela. (1991). *SopanaShailiyudeSastravumSangitavum*. (Malayalam). Keli. Vol.16. pp.11-16.
b) Omcheri, Leela. (1999). *StreeNrityarachanakal*. (Malayalam)KalamandalamThraimasikam. pp.29-30.
c) Omcherry, Leela. (1999). *Music of Kerala*. Kerala State Gazette. Volume 4, Part 2. P.155-176.
d) Omcheri, Leela. *Mohiniyattam* (Malayalam). (1994). Keli. Oct-Nov. P.25.
- ⁵² K, G M. (1895). *Mohiniyattam*. Vidyavinodini. p.24.

Among the above-mentioned articles, *Mohiniyattam* was first discussed in the journal, *Vidya Vinodini* in 1895. The author criticises the existence of the form and provides various information regarding its immoral character. This article may be noted as a solid evidence of the status of the form and the social attitude towards it, during the late 1880's. The performativity and the productivity of *Mohiniyattam* started being discussed extensively from late 1970's. The rest of the journals which are mentioned above offered room for productive discussions concerning the growth of the form.

Some of the published and unpublished theses accessed from different academic sites also critically helped the researcher to carve out a peer and fool proof perspective regarding the present study. "Undomesticated bodies: South Asian women perform the impossible"⁵³ written by Sandra Babli Chatterji was one of that kind which provided insight and a new way to look at the female dancing traditions of the land. Various cultural ideas and interpretations envisioned and developed by Sandra Babli Chatterji like, the concept of '*Lajja*' in the Bengali womanhood substantiated the present research work which focuses on a female dance tradition.

Among the large number of existing studies on *Mohiniyattam* until the present, two recently published articles written by Justine Alexia Lemos in the edited book *Scripting dance in Contemporary India*⁵⁴ and K R Kavya Krishna in the book titled "*Transcultural Negotiations of Gender: Studies in (Be)longing*" can be considered as the novel attempts.⁵⁵ Lemos's approach offers a critical and ethnographical perspective towards the existence of *Mohiniyattam* while Kavya Krishna makes inquiries into the study from the perspective of gender. She discusses the gender politics behind the evolution of *Mohiniyattam*. These two articles are enriched with by-standing theories and data. However, a closer inspection reveals that they do not offer an insider-perspective.

Among the considerable body of literature that has been published on dance pedagogy, the most relevant article pertaining to the current study was "*Contemporary Approaches to Dance Pedagogy – the Challenges of the 21st*

⁵³Chatterjee, Sandra (2005). *Undomesticated Bodies: South Asian Women Perform the Impossible*. (PhD. Dissertation). University of California. Los Angeles. Los Angeles.

⁵⁴Lemos, Justine Alexia. (2016). *Unravelling Mohiniyattam's out-law*. Scripting Dance in Contemporary India. Google books. p.p.29-59

⁵⁵Krishna, K R Kavya. (2015). *Gender and Performance; reinvention of Mohiniyattam in early 20th century Kerala*. Transcultural negotiations of Gender. Google books, 2015, P.P. 123-134

Century”, written by Anu Soot and Ele Viskus.⁵⁶ The article unravels the interloped complexities of dance training and practice. It analyses the history of ideas such as the holistic model of dance teaching, role of the self in dance-learning and somatic approach in dance-learning. The article also attempts to develop ideas to improvise the current pedagogical system of dance in the present hybrid-cultural world. *Dance teaching Methods and curriculum design* is a seminal work that envisages ideas about dance teaching techniques. It clusters each and every aspects of dance pedagogy into several modules. One such module which deserves special mention here is *distinguishing the characteristics of pedagogy* based on the age of the pupil. “*Sarīramādyam khalu dharmasāadhanam*”⁵⁷ an article in Malayalam written by M V Narayanan, renders insight into an insider perspective of dance pedagogy of different dance forms of Kerala.⁵⁸ This article lays emphasis on indigenous ideas of dance pedagogy and also puts forth a phenomenological analysis of the same.

The thesis offers a meticulous account of the Cultural history of Kerala in connection with the practice of *Mohiniyattam*.

In the fourth volume of the Kerala State Gazetteer, ‘*Cultural formation of Kerala*, a collection of profound essays written by the leading scholars of Kerala in the realms of literature, art, music, theatre and cinema are found. These wide spectra of topics throw light on the cultural paradigms of Kerala in connection with the renaissance and other crucial phases. These consolidate the ideas concerning the social system of Kerala such as the changing attitudes and mind-sets of people and its cause and effects have been extensively discussed in this work.⁵⁹

⁵⁶Soot, Anu. Viskus, Ele. (2013). *Contemporary Approaches to Dance Pedagogy: The Challenges of the 21st Century*. Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences. P. 290–299. Retrieved from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042814011847> Accessed on 14 March 2017. Anu soot, Ele Viskus, Elsevier Ltd, ICEEPSY 2013

⁵⁷Body is the fine instrument for doing the good deeds.kAlidAsa in kumArasambhavam [5.33]

⁵⁸Narayanan, M V. (2011). *Shareeramadyamkhaludharmasadhanam*. (Malayalam). Bhashaposhini.P.48-59.

⁵⁹a) Rajeevan, B. (1999). *Cultural formation of Kerala*. Kerala State Gazetteer. Volume 4. Part 2. p.p. 1-34.

b) Nambiar, A K. (1999). *Surviving folk arts, their origin and development*. Kerala State Gazetteer. Volume 4. Part 2. p.p.35 64.

c) Krishna Kaimal, Aymanam. (1999). *Traditional Performing Art forms, Kerala*. State Gazetteer. Volume 4, Part 2. p.p.114-120.

d) Omcherry, Leela. (1999). *Music of Kerala*.Kerala State Gazetteer. Volume 4. Part 2. p.p.155-176.

K N Panikkar renders a peered perspective toward the cultural history of Kerala. Socio-political and economic realms that elicit the nuances of human lives are brought out clearly in his writings.⁶⁰

In the first part “*When humanity chokes in the turmoil of caste laws*” of P Baskaranunni’s book ‘*Keralam Irupatam Nootandinte Arambathil*’ (Kerala, in early 20th Century) he discusses the ordeal in detail. It offers a sharp perspective and throws light on the nuances of cultural formation of Kerala.

The text ‘*Kulastreeyum Chanthappennum Undaayathengine?*’ by J. Devika offers a keen perspective about the gender history of Kerala. This work is first of its kind, which delineates the past events of this land critically holding the gender-equality concerns. Thus, it brings forth numerous segregated tales of women-hood of Kerala. The work interestingly starts at a juncture where the two typology of woman exists. While the *Kulastree* denotes the noble-class woman the other (*Chandapennu*) is independent and free. *Kulastree* is commonly a state of womanhood where women are taught to be submissive. ‘*Chandapennu*’ is a kind of women who had surpassed the gender-crisis up to an extent. It examines the gender history of Kerala in detail addressing the norms and the values imposed by the colonial rule on the lives of the Keralites. This book develops through some of the milestone movements in the gender history of Kerala like; ‘*Maaru-maraykkal samaram*’ (movement for the right to cover the breasts of women) and the struggle for women education and empowerment. In addition, it also discusses the caste-oriented issues. The author tries to foster a fresh perspective of history and interweave a new social relationship upholding the humanist concerns of equality, justice and democracy. This phenomenon of controlling the lives of women resonates well with the growth and development of feminine art forms in Kerala.

Lacunae in the existing literature

The intention of the present study is to open new vistas in the field of *Mohiniyattam*- history and practice. It seeks scope for installing modern approaches in the pedagogy of *Mohiniyattam*, based on the conventional method, by analysing the previous literature in the field. As mentioned earlier, the major lacuna found while

⁶⁰Panikkar, K N. (2016). *Essays on the history and society of Kerala*. Kerala Council for Historical research.

reviewing the existing literature on this subject was the uncertainties and the inconsistencies in the writings of its evolution and history. There still exists ample scope for a study that doesn't give priority to any particular school of the art form, but aims to be all-inclusive to fill this gap in literature. Thus, it scrutinises each and every schools of this art form, highlighting the merits and the demerits of each of their pedagogical approaches. Until now, no study has sufficiently explored the cultural analysis on the history and practice of the form that accommodates both an insider and outsider-perspectives. The present study is designed to bridge this gap by approaching *Mohiniyattam* phenomenologically, employing both the measures of insider and outsider approaches.

Hypothesis

Existing feudal model of *Mohiniyattam* reflects the remains of the performing tradition that draws origin from the subaltern lives of the land that had been totally evanesced in the yore.

The pedagogy of *Mohiniyattam* displays drastic changes from the traditional *Puraskarana*⁶¹ or *Gurukula sampradayam*⁶² of practice.

At times the traits of *Gurukula* system have been submerged in the current institutionalized pedagogy of *Mohiniyattam*.

Sometimes, in the process of the Classicisation of the art form, the true elements of ethnicity in the art form must have been lost or seems deliberately discarded. Hence, the current study also makes an attempt to examine these briefly addressed issues in the area.

The true elements of ethnicity in the art form must have been lost or seems deliberately pulled out in the process of the classicalization of the art form.

Mohiniyattam had to travel a long way to conceive its present stature. It traversed several vicissitudes commencing from the respectful stature of ritualistic and ceremonial spheres to the awkwardness of being much exotic or erotic and finally reawakened from the state of death to be the part of the proscenium stage culture.

⁶¹ An old custom where, the teacher is invited to the house of the student in order to stay and teach the lessons.

⁶² In this system, students are supposed to stay with their guru in order to serve and study.

Relevance of the study

Dance grows through the ages and gets entrenched with the contributions by *Guru-Shishya Parampara*⁶³. Preserving the art form without spoiling its true spirit could be an important task for the Gurus and the practitioners of the art form of all times. As described earlier, traditions get manipulated over time, diminishing and nourishing itself during its growth. In dance, body is the pivotal tool as well as a recording system for preserving the form. Thus, its movement and teaching the same in the right manner becomes important. It is not sure whether *Mohiniyattam* at any shad had lost stages of evolution and eliminated or lost the former characteristics. However, the nature and form of the present-day practice should be passed on to the next generation in an accurate and appropriate way. Thus, the pedagogical approach becomes the major concern of this study.

Scrutinizing the trajectory of *Mohiniyattam* until the present illuminates our understanding of the 'cross roads'⁶⁴ of drastic changes occurred in the pedagogy of this art form. Inquiries into the *cause and consequence* of these pedagogical changes allow us to contextually logicalise the problems and improve the quality of the teaching methodology of the form. So far in Kerala, hardly any initiative has been taken to upgrade the methodology of dance teaching. Even though universities offer *Mohiniyattam* as core subject at graduation and post-graduation levels, most often the concentration is primarily on the theoretical papers. The study of dance pedagogy is much relevant and essential as the major gurus of the yester years are no more and the third generation mostly consists of good performers but mediocre teachers. "It is now widely accepted that transformation of dance content knowledge into knowledge for teaching and learning involves far more than dance technique and control, and that teachers need a wide range of teaching strategies to motivate and engage their students" (Anu Soot, Ele Viskus, 2013: 291).

⁶³Teacher and Student series

⁶⁴Cross road- Critical junctures from where the crucial ideas are made and implemented.

Geographical area of Study

Kerala famously known as the land of coconut⁶⁵ is equally well known for the various performing art traditions it owns. *Mohiniyattam* has been one among the same that had evolved under the patronage of this land under different shades of the societal development. The geographical area of study can be mapped by tracing the root and the travel, the art form has been preceded so far. The traces of the very root of this art form goes back in the *Chera* period under different names (which is discussed in the Chapter of Evolution) and the historical place is *Muziris*, the former port city of Kerala which is presently known as *Kodungallur*. The second phase of development of the art form under the patronage of Travancore royal court occurred in the southern tip of Kerala, from where (this phase of development) we draw upon the proof and evidences of the role and influence of the non-native art forms such as *Sadir* and other female dancing traditions on the native dancing form. After the dispersal of *Swathi Tirunal's* court of Travancore, the dance form travelled (shifted its practice) to the mid part of the state; *Palakkadu* and *Thrissur* regions. At present the art form has gained a good reputation and has been practiced on the national as well as the international platform.

This study aims to concentrate on the aspects given below

- To scrutinize the crossroads and revivals that happened during the course of development of the art form and rationalize the existing historical perspectives of the same.
- To critically analyse the pedagogical evolution of *Mohiniyattam* and the structural changes of the pedagogical system from time to time; and to reassert the new numbers and revived-old-numbers of the repertoire.
- To investigate the pros and cons of the institutionalization and disintegration of the art form and scrutinize the inadequacies, injustices and suppressions that currently occur in the institutionalised sphere of dance.

⁶⁵ Even though the coconut was introduced to the land from Sreelanka, Kerala is interestingly known as the land of coconut among the commoners. Actually, '*Keralam*' is a word derived from *Cheralam* (land of *Chera* kings) (Panikkar,2016; Swarnakumari, 2001, Warriar & Gurukkal, 1992).

- Adapting modern techniques of dance teaching to the pedagogy of *Mohiniyattam* blending the traditional methods with that of the modern dance methodology and shaping out an innovative methodology for the same.
- To discuss and impart various indigenous physical and mental exercises and genres such as yoga, meditational discourses and so on for the holistic growth of the learner as a practitioner of the art form.
- To document the socio-political events that influenced in the art form and to analyse the cultural transactions under gone by the art form before attaining the present stature.

Source of study

Sources of this study could be divided as two: primary and secondary. Primary sources are the direct sources of information and secondary sources constitute the retold or restated information concerning the subject.

A great deal of the study makes use of the **Primary sources**. In-depth interviews with scholars, prominent artists, art-critics, researchers and office bearers of institutions like *Kalamandalam* have been crucial in the course of this study. Most of the clarifications regarding the timeline of the development of the art form and a great resource of novel information regarding the pedagogy of the art form have been unveiled through this method. Insights from group interviews with researcher scholars and senior students of various art institutions have added immense value to the study. **Interviews** using technological innovations like Email, WhatsApp, Skype, chats and video conferencing have also been employed to collect resources from distant places directly. Referring the ancient scriptures and the monumental remaining like ancient temple carvings and sculptures gave ample knowledge about the pre-Aryan history of the land and its aboriginal culture. **Surveys** and case studies conducted in **Kerala Kalamandalam** and other institutions have supplied me with ample resources to reach to the field directly and examine the issues and concerns raised out in this study. Surveys were conducted at various levels among various age groups. **Questionnaires** were made with help of blue prints and the final version was systematically made for various source groups. Various case studies conducted along with the survey were also relevant to the study.

The digital and the non-digital library sources which includes published books and articles (both printed and online), documentaries, films and performance clippings constitute the **secondary source** of data collection pertaining to this study.

Methodology

Research is an ongoing process that combined en-number of methods and approaches. The present thesis has engaged itself, adapting various approaches and methods for arriving at an objective work.

Typology of the current study is **library** and **field oriented**.

Historical method is the primary method employed in the study. Notes related to the area of the research have been taken from the literary and the electronic media sources. Literary works comprising published and un-published articles, seminal works of veteran artistes, autobiographies of the masters of yester years and the media files like documentaries and video- audio interviews related to *Mohiniyattam* have been employed in the initial phase of the study.

Ethnographic method was inevitable in this research. Participant, non-participant and mass observations and direct and indirect interrogations were central to this study. Being an alumnus of *Kerala Kalamandalam*, which is the major focus of the study, ethnographical study was non-complicated and the access to the institution was smooth. Observing the performing patterns of the young artistes belonging to different schools helped to assess the productivity of the respective offshoots of the pedagogy.

Survey method has been employed for understanding some underlying concerns of the current pedagogic approach of the institute. It was administrated with a questionnaire which had two sections. First set of questionnaires was filled by the graduate students whereas, the second set was attempted by the under-graduate students. The responses of the students inarguably were accurate as the questionnaire had been prepared in such a way that the students could respond freely.

Interviews of various gurus and scholars of the art form helped not only to gather the first-hand data but also provided insights to develop appropriate research

methods. Personal and focussed, Phone –in and e-mail methods were also employed during the course of research.

Triangulation is a method that helps us to understand a problem by cross checking it with multiple theoretical frames and successfully avoid biased statements. In this approach, different methods such as literature review, interviews, survey and different theoretical frames pertaining to one single phenomenon are brought together in order to arrive at new observations and perspectives. So far, the research made use of several insights and important theories in different contexts to analyse the situation in a more critical manner.

Theoretical frame of the thesis comprises of the following concepts like:

One of such theory constitute Laura Mulvey's Guise theory. It is implemented where *Mohiniyattam* is studied as the feminine-origin form and particularly when it had been a part of the mere entertainment of the males of the society. it is also applicable in the instance where *Mohiniyattam* became the tool for objectifying the female body.

This study also draws insights from the concept of 'Gender-trouble' of Judith Butler for analysing the cultural evolution of body-movement patterns of *Mohiniyattam*.

Another important theory employed in the study is phenomenology by Merleau Ponty in the context of conventional dance training system of Kerala, especially when its root comes from the age-old martial art tradition, '*Kalaripayattu*'. The theory enables us to delve into the logical understanding of the role of 'body memory' in the traditional dance training system of Kerala or to understand, how the dance students of Kerala gains the eye of auto correction (that is called in vernacular tongue as '*Shareera-Yukthi*'⁶⁶) under the learning system.

The Boden' theory on creativity has been applied for the analysis of different pedagogical frames or major schools of *Mohiniyattam*. Through the three creative models conceptualised and theorised by Margaret Boden in 2011, a feasible method was developed in this study. Besides, the 'concept of Chakra' has been incorporated

⁶⁶a) The term has taken from M V Narayan's Article "*Shareeramadyam Khalu*"(2011). *Bhashaposhini*.

b) Phillip Zerilli also studied and analysed the performativity of *Kalaripayattu* and *Kathakali* in this fashion.

in connection with detailing the circular movements and spirituality. This thesis has drawn insights and perspectives from the Marxist aesthetics for defining the characteristics of spectatorship and social relevance and productivity of the art form.

While carrying out the quantitative assessment on the result of the survey conducted in *Kalamandalam*, I have also cross checked the data by interacting with some of the students whom I felt confident after the initial analysis of the survey. This activity is indeed a part of triangulation technique which helped to reassure the findings that emerged out from the statistical survey.

Chapterization

The thesis is divided into six chapters. The opening chapter which constitutes the **Introduction** is divided into two parts. The chapter opens up with a brief elucidation about dance, femininity and society. The core part of the chapter unravels the connection between the native cultural narratives with the feminine dancing cult of the land and the political and hegemonical upsurges that oppressed the female-lives of the land. The first part of this chapter is fundamentally designed to add depth to the reader's understanding of the context by giving them a back-grounder of the problem. The second part deals with the methodological account of the present research study, which covers the details of Introduction to the study, Statement of the problem, Relevance of the study, Geographical area of the study, Survey of literature, lacunae in the existing literature, Methodology, Sources of study, Summary of the Chapters and so on.

Second chapter entitled **The evolution of 'Mohiniyattam'** opens up with the nuances and intricacies of the term *Mohiniyattam*, commencing from the backdrop of the cultural paradigms attached to it. It travels through the textual appearance of the term and its implications and the socio-political conditions like the caste system and their influences on the art form. Then the chapter moves into a comparative analysis of the art form with other similar art traditions of Kerala. Next, the *prag*-forms of *Mohiniyattam* during the Sangam epoch are described in detail. The sculptural evidences of the feminine dances that are found in the temples of Kerala are delineated in the following section. Moreover, a meticulous account of Devadasis of Kerala is elucidated by referring to the old Sanskrit and *Manipravala* literature. The

chapter finally traces the decline of the art form due to various malpractices of the art form and its rebirth at the court of Swathi Thirunal.

Mohiniyattam: Practice and Pedagogy from Royal Patronage to Institutionalisation is the third chapter which deals with the dual phases of the development of the form. Part one centres on the Royal patronage received by the art form. Under this broad head, the *Darbar* of Swati and his endeavors on the propagation of this art form are widely discussed. The literary and musical contributions of Swathi Thirunal and his poet laureate Irayimman Thampiare elucidated in detail. As Swathi Thirunal is a key figure in systematizing the repertoire and literature of *Mohiniyattam*, the nuances and characteristics of his works and their effect and echo on the form is dealt in-depth in this chapter. Part two delineates the institutionalization of the art form. The early hiccups and struggles in establishing such institute, the painstaking journey of the founder, Vallathol and the condition of the art in the specific contextis narrated in the following section. It also brings into light the names of early practitioners and *Nattuvanars* of *Mohiniyattam* who practiced the art before the institution was found. Further, the dawn of the artistic endeavors of *Mohiniyattam* at the institute is meticulously described with marking of the time schedule, pedagogic patterns and performance journeys of the preferred time period. The models of pedagogy that are adapted by the institute and the earlier individual traditions are also discussed and analyzed in detail.

The fourth chapter entitled ***Schools of Mohiniyattam; Roots, Saplings and Branches*** is exclusively designed for comprehending the major schools and off-shoots of *Mohiniyattam* pedagogic and performative constructs. The pedagogic development of four distinct styles of *Mohiniyattam*⁶⁷ is described in this chapter specifically. Practical lessons of the schools of *Kalamandalam* and Kalamandalam Kalyanikuttiyamma are brought into light here with detailed descriptions. Following this, the stylistic variations of the art developed by the eminent gurus, Dr. Kanak Rele and Bharathi Shivaji are also discussed. In addition, Dr. Kavalam Narayana Panikkar's contributions and influence in developing the art form are recorded clearly. The second part entitled "Developing pedagogic landscapes & blooming branches of *Mohiniyattam*" attempts to examine the off-shoots of the major pedagogic constructs of *Mohiniyattam*. This part also illuminates one's understanding of the differentiations

⁶⁷*Kalamandalam School and Kalyanikuttiyamma School*

of the performative styles of the art form. The chapter concludes with the findings and analysis of the survey “Nuances of institutional pedagogy of *Mohiniyattam* today” illustrated with the help of tables.

***Mohiniyattam* Technique: Body, Movement, Image and Scrutiny of Pedagogical Growth** constitutes the fifth chapter. Being the core chapter of the thesis, it is divided into two sections. It explores the rarely discussed aspects of *Mohiniyattam*. As the title indicates this chapter approaches the body, movement and image of the form through the different frames of ideas- cultural, political and biological. The first part of the chapter offers an analytical study of the development of the form by associating it with the enlightenment movements that happened in the socio-cultural realm of the society. The second part, titled “Issues and concerns related to the development of the form *Mohiniyattam*” renders a critical analysis of the pedagogical and performative development of the form, that embraces a wide spectrum of attributes such as the pre-phases of *Mohiniyattam*, *Mohiniyattam* in the light of Urban-modelling, Origin of the notion ‘Classical’, *Mohiniyattam*-Chronological root map, Dance teaching in Kerala; Early phase to Institutionalization, Nuances of the traditional dance pedagogic system and many more.

The Sixth chapter constitutes the **Concluding** chapter that sums up the idea of the thesis in a nutshell format. It also scrutinizes the concerns in the domain of performativity and pedagogy of *Mohiniyattam* and map out the suggestions with the support of graphical diagrams.

CHAPTER 2

EVOLUTION OF MOHINIYATTAM

Mohiniyattam, lexically denotes ‘Attam’ (dance) of ‘Mohini’ (enchantress) which implies, the dance of enchantress. The genealogy of this term can be traced back to the feudal patriarchal society of ancient Kerala. Whom does a woman enchant with her dance? Who were the usual spectators of her dancing? What were the occasions she had performed? These questions are so immediate after the term ‘*Mohiniyattam*’. The study attempts to rationalize and address these questions from different empirical perspectives.⁶⁸

The geographical aspect of the ancient Kerala deserves special mention. Generally, this region situated in the southern end of the nation enjoys a history of its own that is free from major attacks and military actions. This geographic merit could be attributed collectively to the character of the people in this region.⁶⁹ The people of this region is worthy of admiration for their coherence and simplicity. This quality must have contributed and influenced all other facets of human activities. *Mohiniyattam* which has been fashioned out within a span of several years after its evolution has a distinctive identity for its coherence and simplicity. It is evident in each and every part of its performance.

Coinage of the term *Mohiniyattam* is less likely to come from the mythological tale of *Palazhimadana* in which lord *Vishnu* disguises as ‘*Mohini*’ to fool the demons and take away the *Amrit* from them, rather it was to please the dominant patriarchs (*Adeeshavargam*/ Authoritarian regime) and women were forced to make the lascivious attire. The figurative impression of the term itself expresses the same (Chummar Choondal,1993). Uma Thapasyananda, author of *Sukumara*

⁶⁸When I was in the search of its roots everyone in the field rendered me the same story. Every leaflet has been published in the similar manner. I did not get disappointed. I thought there would be unbridged gaps of events that could be interpreted vibrantly in new perspectives. Hence, the retold story of *Mohiniyattam* is written here bridging the gaps of connotations.

⁶⁹“Kerala has been known as the most active centre of trade from the proto-historical times. It had commercial contacts with Egypt, Arabia, Babylon, Rome and China. It is inconceivable that in the process of exporting teak wood, sandal wood, spices and the rest it did not come into contact with the culture of the ancient civilizations. Indeed, it also exemplifies another seeming Indian paradox, i.e., its ability of forging ties, carrying on dialogue with alien cultures on the one hand, and, on the other, an equal ability to hold on to an ‘orthodoxy’ which cannot be penetrated. While certain aspects of Kerala’s cultural life remained highly conservative and orthodox, there were others showing a remarkable capacity for communication and adaptation. The existence of this parallel tendencies can be seen in many aspects of Kerala’s cultural history though nowhere else is it more eloquently illustrated than its artistic traditions” (Kapila Vatsyayan,1980:16).

Narthana offers a different insight on the existence of the term. *Mohiniyattam* as interpreted by the historical hermeneutics denotes, ‘dance of an enchantress’. But her interpretation of the term is; “the enchantress is not to enchant outward despite is an inward journey and she is attracted or enchanted by her own inner self” (Uma Thapasyananda, Asianet Interview, April 01, 2015).

***Mohiniyattam*: Terminology and its Epistemological Growth**

One of the earliest references of the word *Mohiniyattam* can be traced in the work entitled ‘*Vyavaharamala*’ authored by Mazhamangalam (also known as Mahishamangalam) Narayanan Nampoothiri in 1709AD.⁷⁰ The reference appears in the context of sharing of payment between the ‘*Nattuvanars*’ (dance practitioners and performance conductors) and ‘*Nangais*’(dancers). During the same age the word ‘*Mohiniyattam*’ appeared in the ‘*Thullal*’ (a satirical classical dance form of Kerala) - stories of *Kunchan Nambiar*⁷¹, especially in the text entitled ‘*Ghoshayathra*’ (A Thullal story ‘festival procession’). A verse referring to *Mohiniyattam* appears in it as; “*Madani-mulamaar Mohiniyattam paadavamerina palapala Melam*” (“Aplenty the fiestas; *Mohiniyattam* of full bosomed-chests and so on”) (Kunchan Nambiar, 1989). A ‘*Lakshana Grandha*’ (Theoretical treatise) known as ‘*Balaramabharatham*’ authored by His Highness *Karthika Tirunal Balarama Varma*⁷² offers several notions of the dance form, *Mohiniyattam*. The author states in the introductory chapter that it has been written according to the notions of ‘*Lasya Tantra*’⁷³. And he addresses the dance form as ‘*Mohini Nadanam*’ (*dance of Mohini*). The great Poet *Ullur S Parameswara Iyer*, in his famous and authentic work titled ‘*History of Kerala literature*’ describes *Mohiniyattam* as the predominant dance form of the 18th century (Kalyanikuttyamma, 1999). K G M (1895) and states that “some art forms are prevalent all over Kerala for entertainment purposes namely; *Kathakali*, *Krishnanattam*, *Chakiar Koothu*, *Padakam Parayal*, *Koodiyattam*, *Sangha Kali*, *Thullal*, *Kaikottikali*, *Vaaleru*, *Njaninmel Kali*, *Sadiru*, *Mohiniyattam* etc” (p.24). This note indicates that *Mohiniyattam* and *Sadiru* were in practice hundred and more years

⁷⁰There is a controversy in regard to the initial usage of this word. Because of the change in the periodization related to the existence of *Vyavaharamala* as opined by Ullur S Parameswara Iyer.

⁷¹Kunchan Nambiar (1705-1770) was a Malayalam poet and inventor and exponent of ‘*Thullal*’, a satirical art of dance.

⁷²Balarama Varma (1723-1797) was the king of Travancore Princely Kingdom

⁷³Liberate the self through the techniques of *Lasya* (the delicate and sensual body movements).

earlier. The writer also describes, *Mohiniyattam* as an epidemic that emerged in the course of time and rushes back to time; "Some time ago, *Mohiniyattam* was prevalent all over the state. The performers make their availability in every place once in the year. Likewise, they took a contract to reach the nook and corners of the state"(K G M, 1895).

Perspectives of the Earlier Textual and Literary References

In *Vyavaharamala*, the art form attains an adequate preview. No mystical connections of Eros have been portrayed in this reference. It only indicates the practice of dance and its monetary dealings whereas in *Ghoshayatra* of Kunchan Nambiar, the lascivious characteristics of the art form has been blatantly illustrated. However, the author of *Ghoshayatra* doesn't try to criticize the existing practice of this art form, rather he defines it as a fiesta of the people. Analyzing this reference, one could comprehend that there were no social worries of moral policies attached to the practice of this art form. The people of that period might have considered it as a necessary entertainment praxis for the maintenance of peace and sanity of the society. (This aspect could be read in parallel with the present thought of 'why this world requires legalization of brothels?'⁷⁴) However, on the other hand, it could also have been an act of exploiting and oppressing the lives of the lower-castes of Kerala. It clearly indicates the traits of objectification of the female body, versifying "*Madanimulamaar- Mohiniyattam*". 'Seeking pleasure from looking at the nude body of women' could have been one of the characteristics of the spectatorship of the art form during this feudal period. This notion resonates with the 'male-gaze concept' which was developed in 1970's in the study of the spectatorship of visual media by Laura Mulvey.⁷⁵ This aspect displays its closer ties with the Sanskrit textual traditions of the land. Artist, T Murali elucidates these traditions as; "this kind of Sanskrit literature tradition is akin to the feudal-armored-forces that suppress the ordinary lives and exploit them according to the wish and the desires of feudal chieftains. This type

⁷⁴“There are a number of places in the world where prostitution is legalized. One of such places is the city of Amsterdam. The Government of Amsterdam claims that the legislation of brothels enables them to exercise actual control over the sex industry, and, in return, counter abuses”(KristieTrifiolis,2014:139).

⁷⁵“The male gaze invokes the sexual politics of the gaze and suggests a sexualized way of looking that empowers men and objectifies women. In the male gaze, woman is visually positioned as an “object” of heterosexual male desire. Her feelings, thoughts and her own sexual drives are less important than her being framed by male desire” (Janice Loreck, The Conversation, Jan 06, 2016).

of literature has been conceived to dominate and exploit the lives of the downtrodden for Brahminic-devotion and erotic submissiveness / sexual slavery. One of such treatises is known as *Vaisika Tantam*. Evidentially it could be proved that this literary work has been written in favor of Brahminic rule by themselves to utilize and sexually exploit the life and the being of the suppressed females of the lower class of the society. It is written in the manner of advices given by the senior sex-worker to the younger one about the secrets of sexuality and sexual attraction” (Murali, Face Book: Reader’s Circle, March 23, 2019). A similar idea could be perceived in the Sanskrit treatise *Balaramabharatham* written by Balarama Varma. One cannot grasp the depths of *Mohiniyattam* completely without considering the relationship of the text, *Balaramabharatham* with the art form. (Presently, artistes are exploring the performative ideas of this text more vividly.) At present there have been studies and practical applications of this treatise used in *Mohiniyattam*. *Balaramabharatham* offers reference to different art forms of that particular era.⁷⁶ In addition, it has dealt with the aspects of dramaturgy immensely. Artistes of this era look forward to the attributes of this book to transfigure *Mohiniyattam* into a more systematized and crystalized entity. Balarama Varma refers to a practice called ‘*Lasya Tantra*’ in his text. Dancers and dance scholars often employ this term to enhance the historical value of the art form. However, the dancers bring out only single perspective to this particular analogy. ‘*Lasya*’ is loosely translated as graceful bodily movement and *Tantra* is the ancient mystic tradition that allows one to become free and independent from the worldly bonds. Thus, *Lasya Tantra* could be in turn ‘a mystic tradition that gifts one freedom through the subtle bodily motions.’ This tradition could also be interpreted as the practice of ‘salvation through sexual intercourse’. This notion of *Lasya Tantra* could also have been a succeeding tradition of the above discussed *Vaisika Tantra*, as this idea also replicates the similar attributes of *Vaisika Tantra*. Both of these concepts indicate the societal situation of those days as one of the peak times of loose morals and hierarchical hegemony of the land. The utilization and suppression of female bodies represented in these traditions also prompt us to think about the lack of freedom of the females, manipulated by the Brahmanical dominance

⁷⁶“In *Vyavaharamala* attributed to *Mahishamangalam* / *Mazhamangalam* Narayanan Nambudiri (18 Century) there is a mention of the wages the dancing girls who performed *Mohiniyattam* received. We have already referred to the fact that Karthika Thirunal himself had tried to lay down norms regarding *Mohiniyattam* and introduced at Trivandrum a form of *Krishnanaattam* different from one in the north” (V S Sharma, 2004:6).

of the land. The so-called feminine character of *Mohiniyattam* has to be re-read in the light of Judith Butler's idea of gender-performativity and gender-trouble. (For a deeper understanding, refer to the fifth Chapter, Sub Title: Movement politics: *Lasya Tantra* and Gender-trouble)

In the writings of Ulloor S Parameswara Iyer, *Mohiniyattam* could be perceived as an entity of the elite class of the society. At this point, one could also assimilate the relations of the art form (*Mohiniyattam*) with the cults of Dravidian and Aryan-isms more profoundly, which is discussed at the end of this chapter. The racist and casteist chronicles and connections of *Mohiniyattam* need to be explored thoroughly to reinstate the lost values of the parallel subaltern cultures of the land.

***Mohiniyattam* and the Caste System of Kerala**

The socio-political and economic realm of Kerala had been developed through a rigid hierarchical spectrum of Caste system (Payyanad, 1984). The system categorized the people according to their economic basis and as per their occupation; from the *Nambudiris* to the backward and scheduled castes like *Ezhavas*, *Vettuvas*, *Kuravas*, *Kumbaras*, *Kushavas*, *Parayas*, *Pulayas* and the so called low-born division of the society (Anandi, 1990).

A disgustful dominance of the caste system was prevalent in the society in the specific time period. Each and every community had created their own forms of art on the grounds of their social backgrounds, tastes, culture, aesthetic sense, religious rituals and the rites of passage. When the upper castes organized venues of *Koodiyattam*⁷⁷ and *Kathakali*, (Classical dance drama of Kerala) the backward and downtrodden had developed their own art forms like *Theyyam*⁷⁸ and *Mudiyettu*⁷⁹, which were not treated as elite, but as folklore. As the scheduled castes were forbidden from entering the sanctum-sanctorum of the temple, the art forms such as *Kathakali* and *Koodiyattam* continued to be temple art forms for a long time. The other communities were denied the opportunity to view these performances. Even if they were allowed to watch them, they were not in a position to grasp and understand the scholastic aspects of these refined art forms, which had been propagated by the so-

⁷⁷ Ancient Sanskrit theatre of Kerala. *Koodi* means conjoined, *Attam* means dancing. This art got recognition from UNESCO as the oral and intangible heritage of humanity.

⁷⁸ Ritualistic art form prevalent in the northern part of Kerala.

⁷⁹ Ritualistic art form of Kerala. Prevalent in the middle part of the state. Performing in connection with *devi* cult (*Darikavadham*)

called upper caste *Hindus*. Hence, with the passage of time, these temple arts had become a hereditary property of the upper castes (Payyanadu, 1984).

Similarly, the forward community also did not have the chances to watch the ritualistic art forms of the '*Avarnas*' which constituted the folklore arts. Likewise, the traditional art forms propagated by the respective communities had become the assets of their own community. These art forms were deeply concerned with the life style and ideas of the respective community. After the declaration of the temple proclamation Act, the '*Avarnas*' got the right to enter the temples in 1936 AD. And thereafter, the borderlines of *Avarna* – *Savarna* art forms vanished to certain extent. This transformation is the product of renaissance movement in Kerala that had hugely impacted upon the caste system prevalent in the state.

Mohiniyattam cannot be reduced to a sheer product of Arian artifacts. Every culture is a mixture of different cultures. Invasions and evictions make cultural practices intercultural and plural. However, it is a regular phenomenon that the elites do not acknowledge the artifacts that they have adopted from the subaltern cultural practices. Examining the growth of *Mohiniyattam*, influence of traditions of folk cultural performances in its initial stages could be observed, but not acknowledged. One such tradition that influenced *Mohiniyattam* is *Thiruvathirakali*.

Mohiniyattam and Thiruvathirakali

Veteran dance scholars including Kalamandalam Kalyanikuttiyamma⁸⁰ and Nirmala Panikkar⁸¹ hold the opinion that the earlier pedagogical aspect of *Mohiniyattam* should be read in the light of the '*Thiruvathirakali*'⁸² school of practice at present, as these forms like '*Thiruvathirakali*' and '*Nangiarkoothu*'⁸³ are considered as siblings of the ancient *Mohiniyattam* (*Thevadichi Attam*) (Kalyanikuttiyamma, 1979; Panikkar, 1995). The practical terms such as *Naalu Chuvadu*, *Ettu Chuvadu*, *Naalu Chavitti Thettu Kaal*, *Moonniratti*, *Kalasha Chuvadu* of *Thiruvathira* dance resembles the movement patterns of *Mohiniyattam* (Panikkar, 1990).

⁸⁰Proprietor of Kalyanikuttiyamma school of *Mohiniyattam*. Known as *Tharavattamma* / grand-mother of *Mohiniyattam*.

⁸¹Disciple of Kalamandalam Kalyanikuttiyamma.

⁸²Ritualistic group dance form of Kerala. Peculiar by its circular movement patterns and songs

⁸³*Nangiarkoothu* is a sibling art form of *Koodiyattam*. Performed by women and conventionally by women of *Nambiar* community.

The early unsophisticated format of executing hand gestures and body movements of *Mohiniyattam* can be traced in the basic principles and practices of *Thiruvattirakali*. *Thiruvattirakali* has different schools in accordance with its association with different castes of performers. The emergence and development of this form is based on *Hindu* religious rituals which is considered to be an outcome of the formerly matrilineal society of Kerala. Each caste renders this form of ritual based on their cultural heritage. “There are some ethnic groups from the scheduled caste also involved in the practice of this dance form at Kunnamkulam⁸⁴, region of Thrissur” (A K. Nambiar, Interview, Kannur, 11, Dec, 2013). There are common gestures and symbols personified in these traditions as a mark of its individuality. For instance, the open and shut movement pattern of palms recurs in the presentation of all traditions of performances. It has been evidently derived from the primitive codes of human interactions. Thus, certainly *Mohiniyattam* has some primitive ties with the Dravidian ethos of the yore.

‘Prag’ forms of *Mohiniyattam*: Reference in Sangam Literature.

Many of the theoreticians and dancer historians trace back the root of *Mohiniyattam* to the Sangam Literature.⁸⁵ The typical pattern of dancing which is akin to various aspects of present day’s *Mohiniyattam* was prevalent widely in many parts of Kerala since 2nd BC.

In the beginning of the Christian era, South Indian regions were widely known as ‘*Greater Tamilakam*’⁸⁶. This entire region was under the rule of *Chera*, *Chola*, *Pandya*⁸⁷ dynasties respectively. The geographical area of present Kerala was part of

⁸⁴Sub District of Thrissur.

⁸⁵As *Tamilakam* was a major region of South India one cannot deny the hybridization of cultures that happened through give and take of the people of these regions in those ages. Thus, the forms which were prevalent in those ages in this land could be seen as the root forms of today’s *Mohiniyattam* performance.

⁸⁶“*Tamilakam*, the abode of Tamils, was defined in Sangam literature as approximately equivalent to the area south of present-day Chennai (Madras). *Tamilakam* was divided into 13 *Nadus* (Districts), of which the region of Madurai was the most important as the core of the Tamil speakers. The three major kingdoms of *Tamilakam* were those of the *Pandya* Dynasty (Madurai), the *Cheras* (Malabar coast and the hinter land) and the *Cholas* (Thanjavur and the Kaver Valley) and the founders of the *Chola* dynasty” (Pletcher, Kenneth Pletcher, 2011: 82).

⁸⁷“The earliest historical block that characterized Tamil polity is the Sangam age which roughly covers the historical period from the 3rd century BCE to the 3rd Century CE. The earliest mention of these three in outside the Tamil sources are found in the edicts of Emperor Asoka. The *Pandya* kingdom had its capital at Madurai. The *Chera* kingdom had its capital at Vanji or Karur, a place roughly located near the mouth of Periyar River. At the sight of this once flourishing cultural capital of the *Tamils* lies today a tiny village called Tirukarur, 28 miles north of the now prominent part of Cochin in Kerala. In antiquity, the two major ports of the region were Thondi (identified with a place close to modern

the *Chera* dynasty. The major language spoken in the entire span of *Tamilakam* was *Tamil (Dravida)*⁸⁸. Hence, the major sources that make inquiries into the history of *Tamilakam* are the ancient texts of Tamil literature. They are wholly known with the acronym, '*Sangam Literature*'.

Most of the scholars hold the opinion that the span of *Sangam* literature stretches between 50 – 350 A. D. *Pathitirupathu*, a *Sangam* treatise puts forth enough details about *Chera* dynasty and the lives of the people in the specific period. *Pathitirupathu* is the treatise composed of songs, praising ten kings of the *Chera* Dynasty. Several references concerning art and culture are observed in this text. Incidentally, this is also the earliest text to provide details on art and culture of Kerala. Most of the songs in *Pathitirupathu* provide ample factual information about the dancers and the musicians of the times and general idea about the region. According to *Pathitirupathu*, '*Viralikal*', '*Vayariyar*' or '*Vairiar*', '*Paanar*', '*Paadinikal*' were the names used to describe the musicians and the dancers (Narayanankutty, 2000).

Dancers were engaged in an act called '*Thunankai Koothu*'⁸⁹ accompanied by *Mizhavu*, a one headed drum instrument. This is mentioned in the second song of the Sixth Chapter of *Pathitirupathu*. Artistes used to travel from one place to another with instruments and other required essentials with royal patronage (Narayanankutty, 2000).

Among the instruments, '*Mizhavu*' has an adjoining sound of the music notes, and, '*Peruvankiyam*', is a trunk shaped bamboo instrument. Other instruments namely '*Ellari*' or '*Kaimani*', '*Aakuli*', '*Thatta*', '*Kuzhal*' and many more. were used exclusively to supplement the non-verbal gestures of dance. These instruments used to accompany *natya*⁹⁰ were hanged on their shoulders throughout the travel. It is mentioned in the 1st song of the Fifth Chapter of '*Pathitirupathu*'.

Quilon or Kollam) and Muziris (Identified with the European port city of Cranganore). Ptolemy refers to the commercial importance of both. A Sangam poet called Irukkaddur Thyan Kannanaar gives a picturesque description of the buzzing harbour of Muziris in poem 148 in the *Ahananuru*. *Chola* state may have had its capital at Uraiyur. Its harbour town, the Kaveripoompattinam is the setting of the two greatest Tamil epics *Cilappathikaram* and *Manimekhalai*" (Vijaya Ramaswamy, 2017:5).

⁸⁸Dravidic languages and Tamil.

⁸⁹*Thunankaikoothu* was a dance form which was performed by a group of male and female participants. Earlier in Sangam era dances were staged in connection with the war rituals; *Thunankaikoothu*, *Kuravaikoothu*, *Amala* etc. If the king dies during the war, his army stops the war and performs *Kuravaikoothu* in the battle field. And *Viralis* (dancers of Sangam epoch) were part of *Kuravai* and *Thunankaikoothu*. *Thunankaikoothu* was performed as an obeisance to war victims by installing a stone idol for them (the war victims) and pay their tribute by dancing around the idol. The idol is known as *Veerakallu*. *Thunankaikoothu* is still prevalent in some of the regions of Tamil Nadu.

⁹⁰*Natya*- compendium of pure dance and Abhinaya.

Musicians and dancers lavishly used flower garlands and other embellishments. In some songs, dancers are identified with one who used gold ornaments heavily, wore flowery garlands on their knotted hair and a silk ribbon around the waist line. A clear image of the costume that dancers had worn at that time could be better understood from these descriptions. Treatises like *Cilappatikaram*, *Manimekalai*⁹¹ and so on which were written after *Pathitruvalu* also provides ample details about the *Chera* dynasty, especially about the lives and culture of the people of the region. *Cilappatikaram* is authored by *Ilanko Atikal*.⁹² It is a story divided into three parts, namely, *Pukar Kadam* (*Chola* dynasty), *Madurai Kadam* (*Pandya* dynasty), *Vanji Kadam* (*Chera* dynasty). In the last part of the *Vanji Kadam*, references of *Chera* rule have been observed extensively. ‘*Cheran Chenkuttuvan*’ the then ruler of *Chera* dynasty, builds a shrine for ‘*Kannakidevi*’. The narration of this story is followed by detailing of the dance, dancers and the styles of dance.⁹³

Arangetrukatai of *Pukarkadam* offers a meticulous account of the *Lakshana* (qualities) of masters of dance, music, drum, string, hollow percussion instruments and so on. The construction of *Arangu* (stage/ arena) and the styles of performance are also mentioned. *Kadaladu Katai* renders a reference on eleven styles of *Koothus* (a genre of performance) performed at that time. These descriptions are likely to be based on *Chola* culture of dancing as this part of the treatise is dealt with *Chola* region (*Pukar Kadam*).

In *Kaalkodukaatai* (The commencement of the construction of the idol), the 26th chapter of *Vanjikadam* of *Cilappatikaram*, the king *Cheran Chenguttuvan* travels to *Hemakutam*⁹⁴ with his royal accompaniments to fetch a stone from the place for making an idol for *Kannaki Devi* (Protagonist of *Cilappatikaram*). in *Vanji Nadu*⁹⁵. The “*Nataka Mahilas*” women dancers of *Vanji* township paid their respect to the king from each ‘*Arangu*’ (platform) of their township. This indicates the existence of an *Arangu Sampradaya* (Stage culture) in the art of dancing. In

⁹¹*Manimekalai*, also known as *Manimekalai-thuravu* is one of the five great poems of ancient *Tamilakam*. Authored by Great Sangam poet Kulavanigan Cattamar. This poem is named after the protagonist of the story, Manimekalai, the daughter of Madhavi and Kovalan. The story unfolds the spiritual journey and ascetic life of Manimekalai.

⁹²An ascetic, son of Maharaja Cherlaatha and the younger brother of Cheran Chenkuttuvan.

⁹³Some of the scholars opine that Ilanko Atikal’s *Cilappatikaram* describes some of the incidents of 8th and 9th centuries A.D. There is a reference in *Pathitruvalu* that supports this argument. In *Pathitruvalu*, story of the installation of Kannaki Devi’s idol in Vanji nagara is mentioned just in four lines.

⁹⁴Hemakutam is a hill area near Hampi of Karnataka.

⁹⁵*Vanji Nadu*- Capital of *Chera* Rule.

Neerpataikaati (The ritual of holy bath), the 27th chapter of the *Vanji Kandam*, the king returns from *Hemakootam* to *Vanjimana nagara* with the stone for making the idol of *Kannaki Devi*. When he reached *Vanji mana Nagara*, besides the sea shore ‘*Kazhangatu Mahilar*’, the practitioners of *Ammaanaattam* (an art form of dance and music) dance received the king and his consort. In the 29th chapter, *Vazthukatai*, there is a reference that *Vanchi Mahilar* were skilled in some of the art forms prevalent at that time and such as *Ammaanaivari*⁹⁶, *Kanthukavari*⁹⁷, *Oonjalvari*⁹⁸, *Vallaipattu*⁹⁹ and so on.

Manimekalai, a text written after *Cilappatikaram*, authored by *Kulavanigan Cittalai Cattanaar*¹⁰⁰ describes the story of a woman named *Manimekalai*. The protagonist reaches the township of *Vanji* as part of her spiritual pilgrimage and she happens to see the varied span of its culture and lives. The text illustrates the occasion when she was able to see the streets where the dancers of ‘*Vetiyal Koothu*’ and ‘*Podhuviyal Koothu*’ reside. *Vetiyal* is a performance exclusively arranged for the king's court and *Podhuviyal* is a public performance. This text also touches upon the ten dance styles of Kerala. *Nirmala Panikkar* gives a different perspective on the facets of the development in dance under the aegis of the *Chera* rule. *Nirmala Panikkar* compartmentalizes them as three phases of dance evolution in the *Sangam* epoch. The *Sangam* treatise *Pathitirupathu* illustrates that dancers were involved in their performances before the king's court and in courtyards as public performances. Dancing women of *Cilappatikaram* period held their performances at different venues throughout the country. ‘*Arangu-sampradayam*’ took its birth in this context. After the time of *Manimekalai*, various genres of dance forms like *Vetiyal* and *Podhuviyal* came into being. After the first *Chera* rule, the history of Kerala was uncertain for a span of time. More Researches should be undertaken to fill up these lacunae in history.

Sculptural evidences of ancient dance

A number of sculptured postures of dancing-women are seen engraved in and around the temples of Kerala. It is noted that all of these sculptures are made of rock

⁹⁶*Ammanaattam*

⁹⁷*Panthattam* refers to playing with the balls.

⁹⁸Swing dance.

⁹⁹Song accompanied with the beating of *Ulakka*, a stick used to crush the grains.

¹⁰⁰ A Buddhist monk who penned *Manimekalai*, known as *Maturai Kulavanigan Cittalai Cattanaar*.

and laterite or wood. Temples of Kerala started its construction using wood and rock from the age of second *Chera* rule (Panikkar, 1995). So, it can be inferred that, dancing girls were a crucial or an indivisible part of the society during this particular era. Ancient sculptures found in *Thirukkula Sekharapuram Temple* and *Kodungallur Temple* illustrates a unique culture of ‘dancing with balls’.¹⁰¹ The posture is that of a woman who lifts a ball on her right hand and holds it as if to be thrown soon. The position of the left hand is blurred. She is supposed to be holding her ‘*Uduthumundu*’¹⁰² to prevent untying or the fall. On her ears she has worn a hanging ornament like a chain and a *Rouka* (Bodice) is worn to cover the chest. Her feet are ornamented with *Thala* (anklets). The head is covered with a cloth similar to the attire of ‘*Stree Vesham*’ (female character) in *Kathakali* (Induchoodan,1971).

The sculptures found in *Kodungallur temple* can be attributed to the age of *Cilappatikaram*. *Cilappatikaram* denotes *Panthat-pattu-nritham* which was performed on the occasion of ‘*Kannaki Prathishta*’, This dance form is as old as the epoch of *Cheran Chenguttuvan*’s rule. The sculpture found in *Thirukkula Sekharapuram temple*, engraved on one side of the ‘*Sopana*’ of the sanctorum displays the characteristics of *Chola* culture. According to some scholars the attire and costume seen in that engraving is very similar to the *Bharathanatyam* dance form of today. The *Chola* ruler of 10th century A D. *Rajaraja Chola* and thereafter, *Rajendra Chola* had attacked and invaded some regions of Kerala. These kings were said to have ruled in the *Chera* capital. Thus, the above-mentioned Sculpture (of *Thirukkula Sekharapuram temple*) of ‘*Chola-dancing*’ might have appeared as a result of *Chola* rule in the *Chera* Capital (Induchoodan, 1971). The *Chola* rule might also have been the reason for the establishment of *Sadir*-dancers / *Devadasi* cult in Kerala.

Devadasis of Kerala

The evolution of art in Kerala can be attributed to the *Arya-Dravida* composite culture. It was the initial stage in the state, when temples were built of stone and wood. Temples were not only considered as shrines, but also as centres for learning and practicing of art and literature (Azeez,1992). According to the historical evidences, the second *Chera* rule was established in A.D. 8th century. The capital of

¹⁰¹It is *Panthaattam*, a *desi* form, refined in *Mohiniyattam*.

¹⁰²*Uduthumundu*- A Dhoti just tied on the waists.

the second *Chera* dynasty was *Mahodayapura*¹⁰³. The rulers of this era were iconic figures among the people. The rule was marked as a golden age of art and culture. “The *Devadasi* tradition of Kerala had been enriched by the temple culture that was prevalent in India. *Sringara Bhakti*¹⁰⁴ is the fundamental base of the *devadasi* tradition. The *devadasi* culture developed the visual interpretations of the element *Sringara Bhakti* of the *Bhakti* movement.”¹⁰⁵

Referring to history, *Perumakals*¹⁰⁶, the rulers of the second *Chera* rule propagated *Bhakti* movement in their country. History also denotes a king from second *Chera* dynasty “*Kulasekhara Perumal*¹⁰⁷” (A.D. 9th century) had reconstructed the Sanskrit theatre forms including ‘*Koothu*¹⁰⁸’ and ‘*Koodiyattam*’. He wrote the plays namely, ‘*Subhadra Dhananjayam*¹⁰⁹’ and ‘*Tapati Samvaranam*¹¹⁰’. Being an admirer of dance, he married a dancer and introduced her and her family to the *Chakiar*’s performance called ‘*Koothu*’. This could be perceived as the first attempt to connect the native female dancing with *Chakiar Kuthu*. Also, this might have opened new vistas of artistic collaborations which is evident in the varied expressions of today’s *Mohiniyattam*.

¹⁰³ Mahodayapuram also known as Makotai / Mohodayapattanam was an ancient city and urban center of Malabar Coast of Greater *Tamilakam* (Kerala). It was a neighboring city of Kodungallur. These cities were conjointly known as ‘Muziris’. It was a major center of *Chera* Dynasty (Sreedhara Menon, 2008; Panikkar, 2016; Nadar, 2001).

¹⁰⁴ *Sringara Bhakti* is an essential seed of *Bhakti* movement. It is considered as the pillar stone of *Devadasi* dancing. The philosophy behind this practice is that the yearning of the *Jeevatma* (earthly soul, depicted as *Nayika*) to get united with the *Paramatma* (the ultimate soul, depicted as *Nayaka*). It is to attain salvation through erotic devotion.

¹⁰⁵ *Bhakti Movement* immensely influenced literature, dance, music etc. It was a religious movement attributed to the medieval India. The ascetics used to practice and spread their spiritual dichotomy through their artistic potential to attain contentment. It emerged in the southern region of India in the 7th century A.D. and spread all over India by 15th century.

¹⁰⁶ ‘*Perumal*’ was a royal eponym used by the rulers of *Chera* kingdom.

¹⁰⁷ ‘*Kulasekhara*’ was the title name used by the *Chera* kings of Mahodayapuram. Sometimes this word was associated with the person who was the eldest in the family.

¹⁰⁸ *Koothu* was an ancient form of storytelling art prevalent all over the temples of Kerala. Major shrines of Kerala had the facility to host the performance inside the temple. The special arena built for this performance was known as ‘*Koothambala*’. Earlier, the concerned community of *Chakiars* was alone allowed to perform in this arena. This religious principle is still executed (on the go) in some predominant temples of Kerala. The language used in this art form is Sanskrit and oftentimes, their rendition includes satirical jokes and wits.

¹⁰⁹ *Subadra Dananjayam* is a Sanskrit play written by Kulasekhara Azhvar of ancient *Tamilakam*. Is a story of the wedding of Arjuna and Subadra. And this play is one of the prime pieces of *Koodiyattam* repertoire.

¹¹⁰ *Tapatisamvaranam* is a Sanskrit play and one of the masterpieces of *Koodiyattam* repertoire. It is believed to have written by Kulasekhara Azhvar.

There were different names associated with *Devadasis* of the 1st century A.D. *Nangaiyar*, *Thalinanga*, *Nangachi* respectively (Leela Omcheri, 1994). The dancers associated with the temples were of different status. To quote Dr. Velayudhan Pillai's "Manipravala Kavitha"¹¹¹, the highly respected group of *Devadasis* performed only on the occasion of temple ceremonies. The second and third groups had to arrange daily ceremonial requirements. *Devadasis* were known as *Thevadichi*. The term *Thevadichi* consists of three words, *Theva*, *Ati*, *Achi* or *Deva*, *Padam*, *Dasi*. 'Theva' means deity, 'Ati' means feet, and 'Achi' means woman / lady. Thus, *Thevadichi* is the woman who serves god. Later their 'dancing style' was denoted as '*Thevadichi Attam*' in which *Attam* implies dancing movement. *Sree Poornathrayeesa*, an old temple of Lord Vishnu situated in *Tripunithura* of *Ernakulam* District had an evening ritual connected with *devadasis* known as '*Thevadisshi Attam*' (Leela Omcheri, 1999). An old scripture found in the *Vadakkunnathan temple*¹¹² of Thrissur also gives the details of female dancing associated with the ritualistic proceedings of the temple (Ibid, 1999).

Amalgamation of *Arya-Dravida* cultures propagated the practice of *Devadasis* along with Tantric practices¹¹³ in temples. By the 8th century A.D. most of the temples in Kerala had been reconstructed and also started practicing Tantric rites. The main deity of the shrine is invited to the physical form of '*Vigraha*' (idol of the deity) by the so called *Tantri* (Tantric performer/ temple priest) with special arrangements and carries out all kinds of offerings to please and appease the deity. For merry making of the deity, there would be a performance held of '*Taurya Trikam*' a combination of '*Geetam*', vocal music, '*Vadyam*', instrumental music, and '*Nrittam*', (dance). Even today, this ritual is being performed in the temples of Kerala which is known as '*Seeveli*'. However, today, this temple procession that takes place inside the temple, could not be called *Tauryatrikam* as the ritual does not involve the dance element. The Tantric practices required women accompanists who were good-looking

¹¹¹ Composite language of Sanskrit and Malayalam. Literature of *Manipravala* has plots of any sort. All these *Kavyas* are written in the taste of upper caste hegemony. There could be seen two extremes of communities; upper and lower. Literature of *Manipravala Champus* finds the activities and life style of lower caste people a laughing stock. Movement of *Manipravala* literature could be also read in the context of the up-gradation of Malayalam from other *Dravida* languages (RaghavaWarrier & Rajan Gurukkal, 1992).

¹¹² *Vadakkunnathan temple* is situated in the heart center of Trissur district. It is now recognized as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. *Vadakkunnathan temple* is famous for its acclaimed full crowded festival, known as Thrissur *Pooram*.

¹¹³ *Tantrik* practices are derived out from the fourth Veda '*Adharva*'. It is a form of worship and is executed by chanting the respective mantras along with performing *Tantrik* actions.

and skilled in the art of dance. Temples provided accommodation for these dancing-women to learn and practice dance. *Devadasis* were taught dance, music, and literature and they had become highly cultured and had to deal with the elite section of the society. In accordance with the status given to them, they were known under many names: *Thevadichi*, *Thevaradis*, *Thevaradiyar*, *Rayar* and so on. The title 'Rayar' was given to the *devadasis* by the king. Poets had praised them with the titles; *Mara-chemanthika* and *Mara-lekha*¹¹⁴ (Azeez, 1992).

Devadasis were strictly kept away from their families and public. They had followed a holistic learning system right from the age of five.¹¹⁵ Lives of these dancing-women are described in the book titled "*Dancing girls of South India*" authored by Dr. John Shorti (Kalyanikuttiyamma, 1999). *Devadasis* of the specific period (Bhakti movement) were the well-received and respected part of the society. It must be noted that women from elite families were also devoted to the temple and this rite was known as '*Adima Thallal*'¹¹⁶ (Thampuran, 1990; Kalyanikuttiyamma, 1990; Leela Omcheri 1999). The marriage of *Devadasis* was characterized with special customs. A sword was used in place of Jasmine flower (usually employed in Brahmin marriages) and the god's bride received *Mantra koti* (Bridal dress) from '*Eeswara Peetam*' (Sanctorum). People used to donate money and other valuables to the temples for the well-being of *Devadasis* which was known as *Thiruvati Charthuka* (adorn the holy feet of His Excellency). *Devadasis* were permitted to retrieve from their service by giving up their '*Thoda*' (big ear rings) and submitting '*Pantrandu Panam*' (12 silver coin currency in the Travancore state of that age) before the administrative body of the temple. *Devadasis* were allowed to experience '*Kutiyum Patiyum*' (tenancy and allowance) from the temple administration till their retirement from

¹¹⁴ *Mara-chemanthika* and *Mara-lekha* were the titles given to the prostitutes by several poets of medieval era. *Chandrotsavam*, a poetry written in *Manipravala* during the medieval age gives references about this term and also discusses the plot of its emergence (Refer to Chapter 5, sub title: *Lasya Tatra and Gender-trouble* for further details).

¹¹⁵ *Geisha* tradition of Japan also starts training for *Meiko* at this same age.

¹¹⁶ a) '*Adima*' means Servant and the word '*Thallal*' literally means 'push on' but contextually it is 'to submit'. Thus, *Adima Thallal* is a religious custom followed by Hindus in Kerala as submitting a person before the presiding deity of the temple as his devoted servant.

b) Kings daughter's entry to the community of *Devadasis* and how she was treated there? What was her status among the others? All these are narrated by Leela Omcheri in the article titled; "*Stree Nrityarachanakal*". (Omcheri, Leela. (1999). *Stree Nrityarachanakal*. (Malayalam) Kalamandalam Thraimasikam. pp.29-30.

service (Vasanthan, 2005). Some *Devadasis* had served for the temples without demanding any kind of remuneration¹¹⁷ (Leela Omcheri,1999).

Costume and attire of *Devadasis* were engraved on the walls of the ancient temples of Kerala. A double length *dhoti*¹¹⁸ in '*Pathumuzham*'¹¹⁹ was draped in pleats and was worn as upper clothing (*Mulakacha*). Hair was tied slightly towards the backside of the head. Ornaments like nose studs and nose hangings; ear rings and ear hangings; and a *Pathakam*¹²⁰ around the neck were also worn. The Dravidian dance form of the period *Dasiattam* influenced the style of dancing prevalent in Kerala. '*Uduthu Kettu*'¹²¹, a manner of draping sari, embellishments on hair and so on show closer ties with the tradition of *Dasiattam*. Hair was tied by knotting the plait towards the back side. *Seemantha Chutti* (a hanging ornament worn in the central portion of the head), '*Nettiyalukku*' (small hangings from the edge of the forehead), *Surya* and *Chandra* ornaments and so on were also worn. All these ornaments had evolved out of this cultural exchange. But the execution of movements of these two forms, *Dasiattam* of *Tamilnadu* and *Thevadichi Attam* of Kerala were not in the same tone. Dr. P K Narayana Pillai mentions in the preface of his book titled "*Padya Ratnam*" that a woman of *Chirava* Royal Family was included in the community of *Devadasis* and she was also portrayed as the protagonist of the *Kavya* called *Uthara Chandrika*. As mentioned earlier, inside the community, *Devadasis* followed a hierarchical structure. Among the *Devadasis*, the predominant group was part of the administrative body of the temple. Following them were a group of dancers and singers who participated in the rituals. Next were the groups of light holders of the ritual and sweeper women of the temple (Kalyanikuttyamma, 1978).

¹¹⁷Most of the *Uthama* Category of *Devadasis* (also known as *Kriyangis*- Highly sophisticated) was from elite community of the society. Literally they did not require any remunerations to survive. In some occasions, they even used to contribute a good amount of money and other valuables to the temple administration (Leela Omcheri,1999). *Stree Nrityarachanakal*. (Malayalam) Kalamandalam Thraimasikam. p.30).

¹¹⁸*Dhoti* regionally known as '*Mundu*' is a piece of cloth usually worn by men by tying it around their waists. It almost covers their legs.

¹¹⁹'*Muzham*' is a traditional Tamil unit of measurement. One '*Muzham*' is equal to 0.5 yard. Hence, *Pathu* (ten) *muzham* is 5 yards.

¹²⁰*Pathakam* is a traditional neck ornament of Kerala woman. *Pathakam* is usually a round shaped pendant worn with a chain.

¹²¹The traditional style of tying the (*Mundu*) cloth around the waists. The term '*Uduthukettu*' is constantly used in performing art form of Kerala called Kathakali, Which has a detailed and firm method of tying the '*kachamundu*' (starched dhوتي).

According to eminent scholar and historian Elamkulam Kunhan Pillai, author of *Kerala Sahithya Charitham*, a century prolonged war between *Chera*, *Chola*, *Pandya* dynasties destroyed the capacity (environment) of the country's economic, cultural magnitudes. Later, the temple administration was captured by the people of elite class known as '*Nambudiris*'. This was the period when, they were started to be ruled by the feudal aristocrats. *Nambudiris* had claimed themselves as the prime authorities of the temple body including the *Devadasis*. From this point of history, *Devadasi* community had to undergo a problematic state of affairs. The setback in the economic status of the society had adversely affected the lives of the *Devadasis* (Kala Vijayan, 1983). Their high status had been discredited and they were forced to get involved in the society. Dominant patriarchs started keeping the *Devadasis* as their consorts or even concubines (Kalyanikuttiyamma, 1979).

An ancient text '*Shiva Vilasam*'¹²² discusses the marital affairs of *Devadasis*. The ruler of '*Venadu*'¹²³ (present day's districts Kollam and Alappuzha) *Veera Kerala Varma's*¹²⁴ spouse '*Unnikulathira*' was a *Thevadichi* / *Devadasi* of a Temple situated at *Kandiyur*. The ruler of *Odanadu* (mid of 14th century A.D.), *Eravi Kerala Varman* had his first Lady named *Kuttathi* from *Devadasi* community of *Cherukara*. She was a dancer of the *Kandiyur*¹²⁵ temple. She was referred in a treatise *Vijnana Deepika* as *Narthakeenaam Varishta* in the 125th page, fourth part of the text (Kalyanikuttiyama, 1979; Manku Thampuran, 1990). '*Unniyadi*' the protagonist of the poem '*Unniyadi Charitham*' is the daughter of *Eravi Kerala Varman* and *Kuttathi*. There were many temples associated with the culture of *Devadasi* system. *Kalamandalam Kalyanikuttiyamma* gives a detailed list of them (Kalyanikuttiyamma, 1978). They are *Kanyakumari*, *Sucheendarm*, *Padmanabhapuram*, *Kandiyoor*, *Tripunithura*, *Mattancherry Janardana Swami Temple*, *Tirumala Devaswam*, *Thiruvanchikulam* of *Kodungallur* and many more. About thirty to forty *Devadasis* resided in these temples and they were provided all facilities inside the temple

¹²²*Siva Vilasam* is an ancient Sanskrit poem written by Damodara Chakiar, a poet laureate of Maharaja Kerala Varma's court in the 14th century A.D. The theme of this poem was associated with the king Kerala Varma and his consort '*Karakuttathi*'.

¹²³*Venadu* of Sangam epoch was a compendium of some regions of present day's Trivandrum and Kollam. The word *Venadu* was created from two words; '*Vel*' (lord) and '*Nadu*' (country). The existence of this word can be traced after Sangam era.

¹²⁴Maharaja *Veera Kerala Varma* was also known as *Kerala Bhoja raja* a ruler of *Cochin Empire* (1809-1828).

¹²⁵*Kandiyoor Sree Mahadeva* temple is an ancient Hindu temple of Kerala situated at *Kandiyoor* village of *Mavelikara* near the banks of *Achankovil River*. *Kandiyoor* was the capital of *Odanadu* Kingdom.

precincts.¹²⁶ While, some of the members of *Devadasi* community got married into honorable families of the society, some of them were forced to indulge in prostitution by the feudal chieftains of the society.

This was how the *Devadasi* tradition started to perish into the oblivion. For these reasons, people of the elite classes stopped giving their women to the community of *Devadasi*. By the 13th century, *Devadasis* changed their lineage into a hereditary pattern. With the dawn of 14th century, *Devadasi* tradition started to show the signs of complete decline. The evidences, regarding this decline are described in some of the poems of the late 13th and 14th centuries, namely; *Unniyachi Charitham*¹²⁷, *Unni Chirudevi Charitham*¹²⁸, *Shuka Sandesham*¹²⁹, *Unnuneeli Sandesham*¹³⁰, *Cheriyachi*, *Unniyadi Charitham*, *Leela Thiakam*¹³¹ and so on. *Unniyachi* was a *Devadasi* mentioned in the verses of *Shuka Sandesha* as ‘*Uthamanam Natinam*’ which implies ‘a good performer’. From this reference, it can be inferred that there was a categorization of ‘*Uttama*’ and ‘*Adhama*’ in the realm of art at that time.

The divine dancing of *Devadasis* was disfigured by the feudal forces and narrowed it down a mere object of entertainment (Azeez, 1992). By the time of *Kunchan Nambiar*, this form of dancing was degraded and passed into the realm of common spectatorship (Keli, Prelude, 1995). This newly acquired style of practicing dance replaced *Thevadichi Attam* from the social scenario. There after *Thevadichi*

¹²⁶ According to an anonymous author called C.C in the article ‘*Mohiniyattam*’ that appeared in the KELI in 1969, the author mentions that, the Devadasis of ancient times an economically forward and decent lot of that time danced in the temples. The census taken by the Travancore-Cochin Government carries a mention about a few had rehabilitated from their roots in Tamil Nadu and that they are not the descendants of *Thevadichis* of Kerala (C, C, 1969).

¹²⁷ *Unniyadi charitham* is one of the *Manipravala Chamboo Kavyam* (a genre of ancient Malayalam literature) written by poet laurate of Maharaja Kerala Varma’s court in 14th century. The story of this poem is stuck around the marriage of Maharaja Kerala Varma and Karakuttathi (once was a devadasi of Kandiyoor temple). It is considered as a predominant work of historical verse.

¹²⁸ A predominant work among *Manipravala* literature of Kerala. The author of this text is unknown. *Unnichirudevi Charitham* is a *Champu Kavya* included in the branch of other ancient *Champu Kavyas* like; *Unniyadi Charitham*, *Unniyachi Charitham* etc.

¹²⁹ In the history of Kerala literature, *Shuka Sandesha* of Lakshmi Dasa is considered as the first foremost *Sandesha Kavya* written in Sanskrit Language. It is believed to have been written by a *Nampoothiri* Brahmin about 700 years ago. This literary work consists of historical incidents that had happened during that age in Kerala region, from the south Kanyakumari to the north *Trikannamatilakam*.

¹³⁰ A *Sandesha kavya* was written in 14th century A.D. The significance of this work is recognized with the descriptions that it had given on the geographical characteristics of Kerala. The journey of this poem starts from the capital city of ‘*Venadu*’ and ends at the then port town Kaduthuruthy.

¹³¹ *Leela Tilakam* is an ancient scientific text on Malayalam language. The author of this text is unknown. But some hints given in this text indicates the author is a Brahmin of Kerala. *Leela Tilakam* was written in Sanskrit and it is divided in to eight chapters known as ‘*Shilpas*’.

Attam was transformed into a new form and came to be known as *Mohiniyattam*. This age of decline marks the culmination of the second phase of the development of *Thevadichi Attam* and is later known as *Mohiniyattam* in Kerala.¹³² It may be observed that even today, the members of this age-old tradition of Devadasis are paid *Aduthoon* (pension) by their temple body. Historical inquiries point to the fact that Devadasi practice was followed till 1952 in some temples of the Kochi region (Kalyanikuttyamma, 1999). However, the collective evil mindset of the dominant patriarchy affected the practice of the art form. Thereby, *Mohiniyattam* was legitimately manipulated as a sheer tool of entertainment for the elite clan of the society in connection with the fall of cultural ethos of that era (Chummar Choondal, 1993). Thus, the females who had been engaged in the practice of *Mohiniyattam* continued to get exploited. Due to the immoral practices executed in the form the society had developed an aversion towards this art and thereafter, people hesitated to come forward for practicing it. In this cultural context, *Mohiniyattam* lost its grace and respectability. This is apparent from the exploitation of the performance numbers like ‘*Mukkuthi*’, ‘*Chandanam*’, ‘*Mothiram*’, ‘*Kalabha Koothu*’ and so on. In 1931, on the grounds of these disgraceful reasons, Rani Regent Lakshmi Bai of *Thiruvitamcoor* court declared an Act of “banning the practices of *Mohiniyattam* (Lemos, 2016). Incidentally, after the execution of this Act, *Mohiniyattam* went off-stage for a long period. Then the numbers of *Mohiniyattam* repertoire faded into oblivion. Among the other art forms, *Mohiniyattam* was the most disgusting form of practice. When art forms like *Kathakali* and others were capable of spreading knowledge, *Mohiniyattam* could only assure malpractices of the *Sringara rasa*. The predominant *rasa* was dissipated by the gestures that were used merely to attract the opposite gender. They learned these gestures and other flirting movements from the *Nattuvanars*. The so-called aspect of women behavior in Kerala, ‘*Lajja*’ is absent in these female dancers. The costumes and attire of the *Mohiniyattam* performer resembled *Telugu Culture*,” writes K G M in *Vidyavinodini* (This article was written at the time of the decline of this art form). Hence, after this fall, this dancing style

¹³²As discussed in the previous chapter, there could be various socio-political concerns behind the emergence of the terms *Mohiniyattam* and *Dasiyattam*. In the beginning, the sheer music concerts were *Sadir* and the dance was called *Dasiyattam*. The word *Dasi* is the suffix of Devadasi. Among the elite class, the Sanskrit word *Dasya Putra* was an offensive term to express anger. Thus, it could be a reflection of the disgraceful image that the *Dasiyattam* carried during that time. The disrespect made by the form *Dasiyattam* and its correlated terms maligned this female dance form and this could lead to develop the much recent term *Mohiniyattam*, rejecting the previous term, *Dasiyattam*.

underwent the threat of a serious decline. For the later years, it survived as a part of entertainments inside the mansions of land Lords.

Until the *Tamilakam* was split into two states as Kerala and Tamil Nadu, the entire region had a shared history. In Kerala, when the realm of *Thevadissi Attam* faded into oblivion, *Dasiattam* of Tamil Nadu was also facing the threat of decline. The native dancing tradition was propagated and cultivated by the Royal patronage of *Thiruvithancoor*¹³³ court. This is considered as the third phase of the development of this art form. (refer to the fifth chapter for more details on the five phases of development of *Mohiniyattam*). It was the king, *Swathi Tirunal*, known as the king amongst the artists and the artist amongst the kings, who promoted and enriched this form of dancing with his immense contributions to the field of literature, music and pedagogic aspects of the dance form. The literature that is considered as the backbone of *Mohiniyattam* constituted the contributory works of Maharaja Swathi Thirunal. The social status of *Mohiniyattam* which was regained under the patronage of Swathi Thirunal is discussed in detail in the following chapter.

Historical Accounts of *Mohiniyattam* and its Observations in Brief

The emergence of the *Devadasi* system in ancient Kerala was occasioned by the *Chera* rule, under the banner of Dravidian culture. A closer inspection on the ancient scriptures like *Shuka Sandesham*, *Unniyachi Charitham*, *Unnuneeli Sandesham*, and so on puts forth the idea that the two dancing styles namely, *Nangiarkoothu* and *Thevadichi Attam* were prevalent in Kerala (Nirmala Panikkar, 1995). Although the pedagogical and performance practices of both these systems differ from each other, they followed a similar structure of performance known as *Koothu Vativu*.¹³⁴ As discussed earlier, the technique and movements of *Thevadichi Attam* was based on *Lasya Tantra* which is evident from *Balarama Varma's* seminal work, *Balaramabharatham*. The principal aspect of *Lasya* carries the leading role in this form of dance till now. The term *Lasya-tantra* also illuminates one's

¹³³The Anglicized version of Thiruvithamkoor is Travancore. Thiruvithamkoor is an old kingdom ruled by Thiruvithamkoor royal family was centered at Padmanabhapuram (present day's Trivandrum). Earlier this region was known as 'Venadu'. Thiruvithamkoor royal family is believed to have descended from *Chera* Dynasty (From Cheraman Perumal's third consort). Thiruvithamkoor was also called in these names earlier such as; Thiruvithamkode, Sree Vazhumkode, Vanji Bhumi, Tiru Ati Desom etc.

¹³⁴Later in *Mohiniyattam*, *Koothu Vativu* was reconstructed to the *Kutcheri Vativu* by Maharaja Swathi Thirunal.

understanding of the occupational cult (accepted Profession) of prostitution which was intrinsically linked to this art form.

Devadasi system was propagated and grown full-fledged in the age of the *Bhakti movement*. After the 7th century, *Devadasis* experienced a golden age of royal patronage. They were central to the temple culture. According to the *Sangam* literature (The first literature to refer to the tradition of dancing in Kerala) the female dancers were initially associated with the royal courts. And the transformation of these female dancers' lives into the setting of shrine happened in-between the ages of the second *Chera* Rule (8th century A.D.) and the *Bhakti movement* (7th A.D. – 11th A.D.).

It must be noted that there was no particular caste system followed by the practitioners and performers of dance during first *Chera* Rule. In the second phase of *Thevadissi Attam*, *Devadasis* were associated with the temples and most of them belonged to the Royal families. When *Devadasi* dancing, *Thevadichi Attam* was transformed to *Mohiniyattam*, a particular caste was introduced to the practice. It was after *Swathi Thirunal's* demise, the royal musician of the court *Parameswara Bhagavathar* returned to home town Palakkad. Further to teach *Mohiniyattam*, the musician took some girls from nearby villages and they all belonged to the Nair Community. Again for a period of time, the practice of this art form was taken forward by Nair women. The ancient hereditary art forms were transferred to generations by the maternal uncles of their family. At times, the artists were taught by a master who stayed at their house for teaching.

Pedagogical characteristics of the *Prag-forms* of *Mohiniyattam* and *Thevadichi Attam* shared many aspects of *Dasiattam* of Tamil Nadu. To be specific, their costume and hair dressing had a close resemblance with *Dasiattam* dancers of Tamil Nadu. The historical evidences point to the fact that they used to wear a *Rouka* (Blouse) along with a lengthy dhoti. A significant fact which must be noted here is that *Rouka* was not the part of women dress code in Kerala until the surge of Victorian Mortality. Women who wear *Rouka* were disrespected in the society and usually the *Rouka* was worn by converted Christian women and the women engaged in prostitution. This regimen was prevalent during the time of the British Rule. Women of Kerala were respected in the society only with bare chests. Women from

Nambudiri community (Kerala Brahmins) rarely held a piece of cloth under their arms. This could be a trait of exploiting the lives of women by implementing trickery policies. J. Devika discusses these issues related to the women clothing of the ancient Kerala in detail in her book “*Kulasthreeyum Chanthappennum Undayathengane?*”.¹³⁵

Conclusion

This chapter framed the discussion of the historical accounts of *Mohiniyattam* ranging from its earliest traditions of dance to the medieval age of its decline. The evolution of the term *Mohiniyattam* and its different perspectives are discussed in this chapter in detail. It shed light on various aspects that stood in relation to the growth of *Mohiniyattam* like the caste system of Kerala, dance forms like *Thiruvathirakali*, its ‘Prag’ forms, sculptural evidence of ancient dance, Devadasis of Kerala and many more. Each of these aspects was analyzed and discussed in a critical manner through contextualizing the records of past events by cross checking the available data. The chapter concludes with the opening the third phase of the development of *Mohiniyattam*, which is the rebirth of the female dance form at the court of Swathi Thirunal. The next chapter intends to discuss the characteristics of the development of the form through the Royal Patronage and institutionalization. *Mohiniyattam* as a form has attained a distinctive identity at present solely because of its timely institutionalization. It involves various processes and stages which are discussed in detail in the following chapter.

¹³⁵Devika, J. (2015). *KulasthreeyumChanthappennumUndayathengane?* (Malayalam). Thrissur: Kerala Sasthra Sahithya Paishath.

CHAPTER 3

MOHINIYATTAM: PRACTICE AND PEDAGOGY FROM ROYAL PATRONAGE TO INSTITUTIONALIZATION

Devadasi tradition of Kerala remains a controversial topic among the scholars until present. The cultural paradigms related to the *Devadasi* tradition of Kerala is natively envisioned in the works of Ullur S Parameswara Ayyer¹³⁶ and scholars like Elamkulam Kunhanpillai¹³⁷ who followed the concept and the ideology put forwarded by Ullur. Their works carry relevant accounts and indications concerning the lives of *Devadasis* and the temple dance culture of Kerala. For the purpose of the study, the researcher doesn't attempt to discredit or draw upon the above-mentioned historical writings put forth by the veteran scholars of yester years completely. Neither the researcher is in a position to accept fully the observations offered by the scholars regarding the inexistence of *Devadasis* in Kerala. Also, this study doesn't attempt to bring forth the borderlines of the States when it discusses the primitive dancing system of Kerala as there was no existence of the 'so called' individual states then formally, under the constitution. Hence, the development of *Mohiniyattam* dance could have been on the path of completion as a *cross-cultural phenomenon*. After its emergence, the form underwent the process of shaping and reshaping over the ages in concurrence with the respective cultural ideas and forms, and the tastes of the participants and the audience concerned.

Section - I

The Royal Patronage of the Art Form

The underlying reason behind the initial decline of the art form during the dark era¹³⁸ can be attributed to the feudal chieftains of the society (Refer to the second section of the fifth chapter for more details). The dance form of the specific time period doesn't look like *Mohiniyattam* at present. One may surmise that it might have

¹³⁶Ullur S Parameswara Ayyer (1877-1949) was a renowned Malayalam poet and historian. One among the old *Kavitravam* (triumvirate poets) of Malayalam.

¹³⁷Elamkulam Kunhan Pillai was a Historian and scholar of Kerala. He was the most authoritative historian on Kerala History.

¹³⁸Dark era for *Mohiniyattam* as the malpractices of the art form was more active. It was during the heyday of feudalism in Kerala.

been a juvenile form of the same which was on the path of its evolution. This could be termed as a *liminal phase*¹³⁹ from where the form continued to evolve over the ages adding and nurturing values and ideas and upholding the eternal value that is at the core¹⁴⁰ of the art form. It was the Royal court of Travancore that stood at the threshold of the initial sophistication of the art form and played a central role in the propagation of the female dancing tradition of the land.

This female dancing tradition after the first phase of decline, survived and flourished under the patronage of Travancore court during the rule of Maharaja Swathi Thirunal. His approach towards the art of dance was creative and productive. He did not perceive the female dancing as a mere means of voyeurism. His approach and vision were to rejuvenate and enrich the artistic qualities of the form. Swathi Thirunal (1813-1846), the XXth ruler of the Travancore Royal Court was deeply passionate about literature, music and dance. *Garbha-Sreeman*, as how this child prodigy had been known, turned to be a vast repository of knowledge of many streams at a younger age. He was a ruler and also a polymath who could handle the roles of a musician, a music-composer, a writer, a dance-music-composer, a multi-linguist and an engineer.¹⁴¹ The work entitles *Ramavarma Vijayam*¹⁴² points to the fact that Maharaja Swathi Thirunal was well versed in 18 languages and there were notable compositions in most of these languages to his credit that included Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Marati, Hindustani, Persian and English.

During the eighteen years of his reign, some of his acts like; suspension of Krishnarayar from the post of *Divan*, appointment of Swathi Thirunal's Master, Subbarayar to the same and Krishnarayar's return to the former post were much criticized political developments. In addition to these heated discussions, his affection towards a dancer Sugandha Valli¹⁴³ and Meru Swami, an artiste of

¹³⁹ An anthropological term, coined by Arnold Van Gennep and later developed by Victor turner, to refer liminality in cultural performance, *the threshold of Betwixt-and-Between-Land* (Laurie Burrows, Huffpost, Dec 25,2016).

¹⁴⁰ the unchangeable cord of art form.

¹⁴¹ 'Sucheendram Kaimukku' - "was a punishment of dipping the palm in boiling ghee (*Kaimukkal*) at *Suchindram* Temple performed by *Namboothiris* in order to prove the innocence and integrity in case of punishment by excommunication" (gklokam.com, 2015).

¹⁴² *Ramavarma Vijayam*- a *Campu* kavya written about a holy pilgrimage. Author is unknown.

¹⁴³ Devadasi from Thanjore served in the court of Swati. It is said that later she got married to Maharaja Swathi Thirunal.

*Kathakalakshepam*¹⁴⁴ evoked much criticism during his life (Karthavu,1991).

It is a known fact that the famous *Tanjore Quartet* (Chinnaiah, Ponnaiah, Vativelu, Shivanandam) who rejuvenated and raised *Bharathanatyam* into the contemporary format of the rendition also belonged to the court of Swati. Prior to this period, they were in the court of *Maratha Kings of Thanjore*¹⁴⁵ and after the demise of King Sarabhoji,¹⁴⁶ they were invited by Maharaja Swathi Thirunal into his court in Trivandrum. They contributed significantly to the growth of the native female dance tradition. "Some of the old audit notes of the Travancore Royal Court that appeared in the Manuscript store of the Royal family notes that *Vativelu* was given 100 *Ka* (Rupees), while the other accompanying artistes were given 17 and a half *ka* as their salary" (Raman Nampudirippadu, 1983:6).

The first collaborative exploration in the creative realm of this dance form is believed to have happened in Swati's court. Thus, Swati became the torch bearer for the idea of hybridisation of *Mohiniyattam*.¹⁴⁷

Swathi's Contribution to Dance-Literature and Music

Dance-music and dance-literature require some scope of interpretations known as transitive imageries to support and elevate the core of the form. This endeavour distinguishes the culture of dance music and literature from the sheer concert manner of music genres and the other branches of literature. A great deal of Swathi's compositions are applicable to such kind of music and literature. Initially, *Mohiniyattam* dance is said to have been accompanied by *Sopana Music system*¹⁴⁸.

¹⁴⁴“*Katha Kalakshepam* literally means 'passing time with stories'. This south Indian monodrama involves solo narration and singing of mythological stories, and acting out the characters' roles. Related to the folk Harikatha, it constitutes more formalized religious discourse to the accompaniment of string and percussion instruments, by artists who are talented singers, actors, and erudite scholars in Sanskrit and Tamil epics and the Puranas. The form probably came to Tamil Nadu from Maharashtra when the Marathas ruled Thanjore during the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries” (India Netzone, 2014).

¹⁴⁵The Tanjore Maratha kingdom of the Bhonsle dynasty was a principality of Tamil Nadu between the 17th and 19th centuries. Their native language was Marathi. Venkoji was the founder of the dynasty (Wikipedia encyclopaedia,2018).

¹⁴⁶Maratha ruler of Thanjore during 1795-1832. Patron of music, dance and literature.

¹⁴⁷Today many celebrated dancers including Neena Prasad have tried to incorporate or translate the language of other dance traditions majorly *Bharathanatyam* to the performativity and the practice of *Mohiniyattam*. Neena Prasad has patterned *Mohiniyattam* Adavus, inspiring the *Bharathanatyam* movement patterns.

¹⁴⁸Ancient temple music tradition of Kerala. *Sopanam* is the holy steps towards the temple sanctorum

Swathi Thirunal, with his thorough understanding of *Bharathanatyam* and his expertise in Carnatic Music made *Mohiniyattam* repertoire rich and also replaced the supporting music with the System of Carnatic music. But his compositions also have influence of the native music tradition of *Sopanam*. R B Nayar (1997) observes the characteristics of Swathi's music as:

"Swathi Thirunal's smaller compositions are charming simple, simpler than most other musical compositions. His larger pieces including *Varnams*, on contrary, are highly complex and put to the test the vocal powers of any advanced musician. The composer is equally at home in both kinds of compositions. In some devotional pieces Swathi Thirunal finds the most congenial sphere, the charm of the melody being allied to the *Sopana* method and attaining the highest reflection in this line" (Nayar, 1997:25).

He introduced this dance form to the prestigious regional festival of 'Navarathri'.¹⁴⁹ However we have no evidences that reveal the existence of *Mohiniyattam* as a systematised form under Swati's rule. Analysing some of the subsequent moments in the history of dance forms in Kerala, one can undoubtedly say that Swati's efforts in rejuvenating the female dancing tradition of the land became fruitful later in the development of *Mohiniyattam*. It is an undeniable fact that the female dancing tradition was reborn at the court of Swathi Thirunal after its premature demise (first decline).

Among the Music-Compositions of Swathi Thirunal, many *Kritis* are found suitable for dance-music, and they are composed in different tonal-textures and notes. The incorporation of music could not be the same for all dance presentations. For instance, the sheer movement-oriented dance which is devoid of *Abhinaya* technically called as *Suddha Nritha* demands a different mode of singing in tune with the movement culture. The corporeal execution of stretches, jumps and walks are supposed to be reflected in the supporting music system. In the expressional dance sequences, music is supposed to be more responsive and expressive. Swathi's compositions for pure dance pieces were majorly *Swarajatis* (A number of Carnatic Music). He wrote more than six *Swarajati*-compositions in the ragas, *Sankarabharanam*, *Kalyani*, *Kamboji*, *Thodi*, *Atana* and *Khamas* and so on. Apart

The word *Sopana* comprises of three elements "*Sa*, *Upa* and *Yanam* which means 'the way upwards' or the steps leading to the inner sanctum of Kerala's temples where devotional songs and religious compositions are sung" (Nayar, 1997:25).

¹⁴⁹Swathi Thirunal composed a number of Padams and Padavarnams for staging *Mohiniyattam* during the Navarathri festival at Trivandrum (Sreedhara Menon,2008:80).

from these, he also wrote a *Swarajati* in *Ragamalika* and it is known as '*Pancha-raga Swarajati*'¹⁵⁰. The rhythmic variations and utilization of diverse *gaits*¹⁵¹ that are visible in this *Swarajati* itself is a prime example for his expertise in dance-music. The *Varnam* is now a predominant part of both Classical Music and Dance traditions of South India. There are 23 *Varnas* in total in various *talas* and *ragas* to the credit of Maharaja *Swathi Thirunal* (See appendix no. 4 'List of attributes' for the list of *Varnams* composed by *Swathi Thirunal*). The collective nature of these *Varnam* is in tune with the thematic representation of *Nayika* and *Nayaka* stories¹⁵². Most of these *Varnams* are central to the *Mohiniyattam* repertoire of the present times.

Mohiniyattam recitals in the court of *Swathi Thirunal* was a daily treat in the post-hours of the evening dinner. A royal building was built and devoted exclusively for the artistic activities. Women who were part of these performances were known as *Natakashala* (the place where performances given) entities (Semmangudi, 1986). The Royal Palace offered them remuneration and the Royal Patrons encouraged them by bestowing titles and special gifts. *Swathi Thirunal* showed keen interest in writing new materials for their performance endeavours (Gupthan Nair, 1984). He was also the one who designed the basic idea of the *Mohiniyattam* costume of the present day.¹⁵³ The poet laureate of *Swathi Thirunal's* court, *Irayimman Thampi* also contributed a number of *Krithis* (compositions) to enrich the music of *Mohiniyattam*. His daughter *Kutti Kunju Thangachi* was also engaged in writing and composing of *Mohiniyattam* *krithis*. *Swathi Thirunal* made a laborious effort to redefine the old school of music renditions in *Mohiniyattam*. He renewed the art form by inculcating the *Kutcheri* Sampradaya of Carnatic Music. Even today, major items of *Mohiniyattam* repertoire render the compositions of Maharaja *Swathi Thirunal*.

Kalamandalam Kalyanikuttiyamma opines that the usage of *Hastha-mudras* (hand gestures) had been developed in *Mohiniyattam* with the influence of *Kathakali* during *Swathi's* rule (*Kalyanikuttiyamma*, 1975). However, there is no other primary source that substantiates this idea. *Swathi's* engagement with the practice of

¹⁵⁰ A *Swarajati* that is set to Five *Ragas*.

¹⁵¹ *Gaits*- rhythmic pattern/ units included in the beat. There are five *gaits*. Three, four, five, seven and Nine.

¹⁵² Philosophy of *Bhakthi Prasthanam*- tales of *nayika* *nayaka* representing the connection between *Jeevatma* and *Paramathma*.

¹⁵³ "The present costume in *Mohiniyattam* which comprises of a short blouse, a trim cloth worn crinkled round the waist and beautiful jewellery was designed by the Maharaja." (Sreedhara Menon, 2008: 80).

'*Dasiyattam*' is an acknowledged fact. Thus, the influence of that culture (*Dasiyattam* of Tamil, because the dancers of Swathi's court were non-natives) on *Mohiniyattam* is an undeniable reality. After the demise of Swathi, owing to the lack of patronage, a long dark period of almost eight decades fell upon the dance form. The feudal lords who offered patronage to the dance form did not contribute to its growth, rather they were interested more in the dancers.

Dispersal of the court of Swathi caused the separation of the artistes from their artistic group and broke the harmony of the work that they have been doing together until then. Due to this predicament of the dance form, *Thanjore* brothers returned to their home town. And the *Bhagavathar* (a Dance Musician-cum-*Nattuvanar*) along with some of the dancers who had worked in the *Swathi Sabha* moved to Palakkad region of Kerala. In due course of time, it got dispersed from one particular place to the other. In the specific dance form under study, it was from Trivandrum to Palakkad. Due to this, *Kutcheri Sampradayam* came into contact with the already existing *Mohiniyattam* practices in Palakkad (For more details, refer to chapter five).¹⁵⁴ Even though the feudal lords did not put an end to the royal patronage given to the arts, their focus deviated from the female dance tradition to other theatrical expressions like, Kathakali.¹⁵⁵ So, the replacement of the function of entertainment by another genre also became a catalyst in the decline of popularity of the female dance form.

Reflections on the Life of Early Performers

It is a known fact that there were *Nattuvanars* in Palakkad and Thrissur regions who were engaged in the teaching practice of *Mohiniyattam* in the medieval era (16th century to 1956). Since the time of its initial presence in the literature (in *Vyavaharamala* and *Ghoshayatra* so on), it has been known as a disrespectful practice. Hence, it is apparent that before and after the period of Swathi, the feminine

¹⁵⁴After Swathi Thirunal's demise, Vativelu and the Devadasis who worked in the court, returned back to their home town Thanjore. Parameswara Bhagavathar, a musician of Swathi Thirunal's court returned to Palakkad. Parameswara Bhagavathar was also skilled in *Mohiniyattam* dance. He spread the art form in and around the villages of his district; Pazhayannur, Lakkadi, Koratti (Korattikara), Peringottukara, Kurissi (Killi Kurissimangalam) etc. He selected some girls from the Nair community and taught them the dance form. That's how the art form spread across the region of Palghat and showed its prominence in the Thiruvithamcoor region.

¹⁵⁵The successor of Swathi, UthramThirunal did not propagate *Mohiniyattam*, instead his complete attention was on *Kathakali*.

dance tradition of Kerala was looked down upon and the dancers were exploited. The performers and the viewers of *Mohiniyattam* during the feudalistic era were mostly performing erotic poetry. This is evident from the second Novel in Malayalam, *Meenakshi* written by Cheruvalathu Chathu Nair in 1890.¹⁵⁶ (It is published just eleven months after the first Malayalam Novel, *Indulekha* of Chandu Menon). The preface of the novel itself emphasises that “Chathu Nair wrote this novel against the malpractices and customs of the then society which includes: *Thirandu Kalyanam*, *Thali Kettu*, *Shaishava Vivaham*, *Mohiniyattam* etc.” (Chathu Nair, 2nd edition, 1990). The disrespect towards the dance form became clearer when the author wrote that he didn’t even want to spoil the ink writing a moral on a turpitude form like *Mohiniyattam*. Many academic professionals and authors hold the opinion that Chathu Nair might not be speaking of reality of the times especially with regard to *Mohiniyattam*. But the parallel writings of the times reinforce this scornful attitude. In the seventh chapter of *Meenakshi* which is titled *Govindante Madangivaravum Vazhiyil Vachukanda Mohiniyattavum* (Govindan’s return and The *Mohiniyattam* performance on way-back), that the author writes-

“Today’s performance is going to happen in the house of the Inspector Ittirarissa Menon. If you want to see the performance you can come along! There would be an extraordinary ‘*Poli*’¹⁵⁷ tonight!’ says the programme manager (*Nattuvan*) to Govindan. The performance is to be held in the north side of *Nedumpura* (a part of the building). There are around forty Brahmins and sixty feudal chieftains of the society seated in the hall. And the performance is given facing the south side of the hall.”

These written accounts reveal that the *Mohiniyattam* performances of the specific time period took place only at the venues of influential members of the society. It was in a closed setting and the viewers belonged to the elite class. The *Attam* starts around 8 pm and as per the order of Ittirarissa Menon, it has to be concluded by 11’O’ clock. Among the three female dancers, two are daughters of the conductor of the play. The money got accumulated after the *Poli* was a total of 175 rupees. Therefore, the minimum duration of *Mohiniyattam* performance during that age was approximately three hours. And there were no much moral concerns indulged in the lives of *Nairs* especially during the medieval age when most of the times the father or maternal uncle becomes the manager of these indecent practices of

¹⁵⁶Chathu Nair, Cheruvalath. (1990). *Meenakshi*. Thrissur: Kerala SahithyaAkademi.

¹⁵⁷‘*Poli*’ means to celebrate. Not to be confused with any mother goddess cult of Kerala.

Mohiniyattam. It has already been discussed in the first and second chapter of this thesis.

However, the practice was perceived in a derogatory sense till it got revamped into the institutionalization phase. The next section of the chapter opens up the description of the context of the malpractices of *Mohiniyattam* during the feudal age.

Section - II

Institutionalization of the Art form

The Dark-Age or the Decline of *Mohiniyattam*

Mohiniyattam had once again been overlapped by the political affairs and thereby the artistic quality of the form was pushed into the oblivion. As mentioned in the earlier chapter, in the subsequent moments of its evolution, *Mohiniyattam* was widely practiced by the women of Nair communities. The performances were often arranged by their (performer's) maternal uncles who were the *Nattuvanars* in most cases, in the mansions of landlords sometimes with an intention of making *Sambandham* with the people who were in power (M V Narayanan, Interview, Puranattukara, 08, March, 2014). This idea guides us to the point that hereditary practices of *Mohiniyattam* were also prevalent during that time. Like the other predominant physical art forms of Kerala, *Mohiniyattam* was also learnt through *Puraskaranam* (Ibid) (which will be discussed in the last part of the chapter).

The period from 1850s to 1920s witnessed the golden era of *Kathakali*.¹⁵⁸ This central dominance of *Kathakali* in the society (in that particular age) also contributed to the decline of *Mohiniyattam* to a certain degree. However, at the same time, it also helped *Mohiniyattam* to grow up to its current status of recognition.¹⁵⁹ The movement of *Kathakali* dance-propagation was encouraged by some influential individuals of the society. Later, the decline of Landlordism severely affected the growth of *Kathakali*.

¹⁵⁸ *Kathakali* was propagated by the landlords of the society. The feudal families had owned *Kathakali Kaliyogam* in their *Tharavadu*. They used to conduct performances in constant intervals. The remuneration for the *Kathakali* artistes was set in accordance with the duration and the number of the plays. The members of the *Kaliyogam* were paid (apart from their remuneration) *UchaKanj*, oil for their evening bath, a full-fledged dinner, oil for lighting the lamp and 10 Rupees as their stage payment (Ramankutty Nair, 1992).

¹⁵⁹ The initial thought of Vallathol Narayana Menon, the founder of *Kalamandalam* about implementing the dance faculty at his institute was to encourage and boost up the *Kathakali* performances by adjoining the dance pieces in it.

With the passage of time, disintegration of the power and the financial freedom from the landlord classes led to the fall of the system and subsequently, the art form. During that time, *Mohiniyattam* was also facing a chapter of ridicule in its existence. After Maharaja Swathi Thirunal, there was not a single ruler who had such passion towards the art form. Within no time it turned out to be a full- busted sexual entertainment. The core content of the art form was transformed and reduced into the status of a sensual image to support men's voyeurism. An article published in *Vidya Vinodini* (Discussed in the earlier chapter) states the pathetic condition of *Mohiniyattam* practices of the times when the performers of *Mohiniyattam* were indulged in travelling with their troupe and found the stages on their own. Within the passage of time, the art form attained a disgustful stature in the society (K G M. 1895).

Traditional *Mohiniyattam* Performers during the 20th Century

Mohiniyattam performance troupe included *Nattuvanar* (The one who leads the performance), three or more female artistes (Aged below 30), a *Maddale* artiste, a pipe instrumentalist, and two assistants. They used to travel all through the village on foot and perform at many venues including the temple premises and landlords' houses.¹⁶⁰

According to the historical accounts, the most sought after *Mohiniyattam* exponents of the first half of the 20th century were: Kongottu Kadukkassery Parukuttiyamma of Lakkidi, Kochukuttiyamma of Mankili, Kalipurayath Kalyaniyamma and Kunjikuttiyamma of Pazhayannur, Narayaniyamma of Nadavarambu, Irinjalakkuda, Mullathu Madhaviyamma of Korattikkara, Kottulli Narayaniyamma, Mullappalli Meenakshiyamma and Kaliyamma, Chomayil Ramankandathu Valappil Madhaviyamma, Ammalu Amma, and Lakshmi Kuttiyamma of Puthanpuraykkal, Appuredath Kunjikuttiyamma and Kunju Amma, Orikkaledathu Kalyani Amma of Peringottu Kurissi and so on. And the famous *Nattuvanars* of that time were, Chemmamthatta Puthumana Gopala Paniker, Anikkodu Matathil Ganapathi Ayyer of Palakkadu, Thaikootu Valappil Krishnan Nair, Kalamozhi Krishna Menon of Achipra, Thaikkottu Valappil Sekharan Nair etc.

¹⁶⁰From different sources of Literature such as an Article of *Vidya vinodini*, Novel *Meenakshi*, articles written and published by many dance scholars etc.

(Leela Namputhirippadu, 1999). The artistic lineages of the present day's *Mohiniyattam* goes back to these above-mentioned Gurus. Orikaledathu Kalyaniyamma, Chomayil Madhaviyamma, Krishna Paniker, Kalamozhi Krishna Menon, Chinnammu Amma and Kunjukuttiyamma were closely associated with the institutionalization of the art form in different course of time. For them it would have been a sort of replantation of the idea. For instance, they had learnt the craft and performed it in a different context of time and setting, and when they came into institutionalized setting, they had to relocate and rebuild the total idea of the form. While, Kalamozhi Krishna Menon and Chomayil Madhaviyamma became the major exponents of the well-established Kalyanikuttiyamma's School of *Mohiniyattam*. Krishna Paniker and Chinnammamma had been the fundamental support for the growth of *Kalamandalam* School of the dance form. Kunjikuttiyamma supported the non-native exponents of *Mohiniyattam* like Kanak Rele and Bharathi Shivaji to implement a fresh organic structure of *Mohiniyattam* (For more details in this regard, refer to the fourth chapter).

Paving the Path for Institutionalization

Mahakavi Vallathol Narayana Menon (Vallathol Kozhiparambil Narayana Menon), is renowned for his pioneering literary works attributed to the Indian nationalistic movement. It wouldn't be erroneous to say that the art forms like *Kathakali*, *Mohiniyattam* and many more, had breathed a new life because of the vision of this poet. Vallathol had kept an intense relationship with *Kathakali* and other art forms of Kerala right from his childhood. Vallathol's father, Kadungottu Mallissery Damodaran Ilayathu was a great aficionado of *Kathakali* and *Mohiniyattam*. Owing to his keen interest towards these art forms, Vallathol's father had formed a *Sabha* and ran public performances. He had established the *Sabha* for *Mohiniyattam* and travelled with the performance troupe supervising and arranging the performances all over the region of Tirur, a sub-district of Malappuram. But he had to soon refrain from chasing his passion due to a serious financial crisis (Leela Namputhirippadu, 1999). From the age of four, Vallathol started attending *Kathakali* performances with his father and from his art enthusiastic-father he could imbibe at a tender age itself, the art form in its buxom essence. Once he grew up, he began going after the bells of *Kathakali*. Whenever he found no stages for *Kathakali*, he would

soon go to his ancestral home and arrange the performances accordingly. *Vallathol*-family was one of the most influential families then to hold *Kathakali* performances. *Vallathol Tharavadu* hosted aplenty *Kathakali* performances presented by the exponents of the time.

When *Vallathol* moved to *Kunnamkulam* as part of his professional assignment as an editor cum publisher of the magazine *Atma Poshini*, he developed close connections with the members of *Matapadu* (*Matapadu* is a common title of *kovilakamas* (houses of royal clan) like, *Manakulam*, *Chiralayam*, *Chittathur* and *Kumarapuram*.) and Mukundaraja of *Manakulam*. *Matapadu* had a well-established *Kathakali Yogam* (Kathakali Group) and *Kalari*. Vallathol's unbound passion and admiration towards the art form made him a daily-visitor of *Matapadukalari*.

Vallathol had written in the preface of the *Attakatha* (literature of *Kathakali*) '*Vamanavatharam*' authored by *Kunjunni Thampuran* of *Manakulam Kovilakam* that the future of *Kathakali* could be secured in the hands of stalwarts like *Kunjunni Thampuran* and others. *Kunjunni Thampuran* expressed his great agony to Vallathol in regard to the imminent dead-knell of *Kathakali* triggered by the decline of landlordism. Thence, no one would be able to take initiative towards the propagation of the art form due to monetary-threats. Vallathol was upset and spend some time in deep contemplation to do something feasible regarding the sustenance of this rich tradition of art. Finally, he arrived at the thought of building up a guild for the art form.

Later, Vallathol discussed this concept with *Manakulam Mukundaraja*. *Kalamandalam* was a fruit sprouted out of the profound consonance of the three immense art lovers; Mahakavi Vallathol, Mukundaraja and *Manakulam Kunjunni Thampuran*. Unlike *Manakulam Kunjunni Thampuran* and Vallathol, *Manakulam Mukundaraja* hadn't had that sort of interest towards experiencing other art forms rather than *Kathakali*. But he wholeheartedly supported them throughout the initial hiccups and struggles (Leela Namputhirippadu, 1999; Killimangalam Vasudevan Namputhirippadu, Interview, *Mulamkunnathukavu*, 25, March, 2014). Leela Nampoothiripadu (1999) hits a point that, "when we say *Kalamandalam* as established by Vallathol Naryana Menon often the name of *Manakulam Mukundaraja* is being casted away" (p.36). The author adds, "among these three, if one was not born, the

concept of *Kalamandalam* would have never been existed.” Further discourse discussions carried by Vallathol and Mukundaraja with various art-enthusiasts and meritorious personas of the society led to the casting of the foundation-stone of *Kalamandalam* in 1922. The decline of Landlordism had also affected the sustenance of the art forms like *Kathakali* and *Mohiniyattam*. Vallathol evolved his concept of building up a temple of arts to rescue these art forms from the threat of this decline. The monetary concern was the initial hurdle that haunted his project.¹⁶¹ It wasn’t an easy task to raise fund for holding practices and performances at a time when the primary essentials of livelihood like food, accommodation and miscellaneous things were also under ambiguity. Thus, to overcome this predicament, the authorities of *Kalamandalam* decided to host a series of ticket-plays of *Kathakali*. In March, 1922 Mahakavi Vallathol and Manakulam Mukundaraja shared the idea of ‘ticket-play’ with some of the revered individuals of Thrissur which led to the formation of a committee to organize the performance series. The chairman of the programme committee was the then renowned Judge Ananta Narayan Ayer and other venerable personalities in the committee were Kunder Narayana Menon, Komattil Achutha Menon, Ullattil kandar Menon, Pandyala Narayana Menon, Kannangathu Raman Menon, Kopparambil Govindan Nambiar and so on. The committee decided to organize regular ticket plays for four days at Thrissur. Artistes had been invited from all over the state to participate in the event. More than 100 artistes were part of the event and they were also paid with decent remuneration (Leela Namputhirippadu, 1999). One of the social embargos was demolished through this attempt of conducting performances in public, taking it out of the temple and the elite-home precincts. It was at this point, *Kathakali* and *Mohiniyattam* had been brought into the spectatorship of the common men. Institutionalization broke out most of the norms and restrictions imposed upon the spectatorship and participation of the art form. This could be considered as the social-debut of *Kathakali*.

The first monetary donation received in the name of *Kalamandalam* was a sum of 100 rupees, donated by Nilambur senior Manaveda Raja. After the unanticipated success of the *Kathakali* performance-series held at Thrissur, Vallathol and Mukunda Raja had been in great trouble of debt. However, a happy truth which

¹⁶¹ The second world war which affected every nook and corner of the world, disrupted the funding of *Kalamandalam* (Surendran & Unnikrishnan, 1989:25). *The great depression* (1929-34) also had affected India according to some scholars. Thus, it also could have affected the state severely.

they found overwhelming was that the people came forward in impressive numbers to pay and watch more *Kathakali* plays. The realization of this new shift that had happened in the spectatorship energized them to focus on their mission more vivaciously. Following the Thrissur series, they hosted plays at venues of the neighbouring cities including Kozhikode, Alappuzha and Palakkad.

The first organizational registration under the title of *Kalamandalam* happened in *Kozhikode* in December 1927. The objectives of the registered Organization as mentioned by Leela Nambudirippadu were:

- To propagate the art forms of Kerala.
- To teach the performing art forms of Kerala like *Kathakali*, Theatre, *Chakiar Koothu*, *Thullal* etc.
- To encourage the connoisseurship of the art forms of Kerala.
- To teach literature, music, fine-arts etc. (Leela Namputhirippadu, 1999).

It commenced in a small condominium Leela Vilasam at Kozhikode. The respected personas in the governing body of the guild were: Nilambur Senior Manaveda Raja as *Rakshadhikari* or Secretary, Vallathol Narayana Menon as Chairman, Dr. K P Paniker as Financial Officer Manakulam Mukundaraja as Superintendent and Manjeri S Rama Ayyer, U Gopala Menon, and Komattil Achutha Menon as syndicate members respectively (Killimangalam Vasudevan Namputhirippadu, Interview, Mulamkunnathukavu, March, 2014). Vallathol's dream of building a secure nest for traditional art forms of Kerala turned into a reality at this juncture. Despite the financial setback and other challenges, it grew further. The establishment of *Kalamandalam* also brought drastic changes in the caste-oriented society of Kerala. It could make the performers of traditional art forms free from the caste dominant setting to an extent.¹⁶² (But these caste liberations of art could only reach the lower end of the upper caste communities. The institution itself did not encourage members from the lower ends of the society for joining the art training.)

¹⁶²“The birth of *Kalamandalam* was significant in several respects. It was the first concerted effort in institutionalizing training in classical performing arts which were till then wholly dependent on the patronage of provincial kings and land lords. The artistes, especially the *Kathakali* artistes, were mostly the aesthetic victims and silent sufferers of the caste hierarchy, predominant in Kerala, during the period. *Kalamandalam* effectively, but silently, paved way to the social and cultural emancipation of traditional artistes. At the same time death of patronage started to raise serious challenges even to the survival of *Kathakali* and *Mohiniyattam*, the two major classical art forms of Kerala. The credits for ensuring their continued existence and progress under the newly evolved institutional set up should go to Vallathol” (Prabodhachandran Nayar, 2004:102).

However, for *Mohiniyattam* it was a boon that there was a pressing need from the institution itself to bring the dance form to the forefront.

The Dawn of *Mohiniyattam* at *Kalamandalam*

Eventually *Mohiniyattam* was in its full blossom and on par with other art forms in the society. During the British rule, the art form literally vanished off from the scenario (Killimangalam Vasudevan Nampudirippadu, Interview, Mulamkunnathukavu, 25, March, 2014). Considering the cultural backdrop, one cannot blame the British ban of the art form as there were several malpractices attached to the form during that age. But undoubtedly it is men's idea about women that tarnished the innocence and beauty of the form in that particular age. The idea of rejuvenating *Mohiniyattam* evolved out in Mahakavi's thought when he was residing at '*Matapadu*'. The initial procedures to widen the scope of the dance form started off from *Ambalapuram* (a Village of Thrissur Dist.). Right from an early age, he displayed a true passion towards *Mohiniyattam* as well as *Kathakali* with equal intensity. It had been one of his dream projects to rejuvenate *Mohiniyattam* and rename it as *Kairali Nritham* (Dance of Kerala) (Ibid). Most of the scholars and meritorious people of the then society scoffed at him and criticized his ventures of bringing an art form like *Mohiniyattam* to the forefront. No one was as daring as Mahakavi to appreciate and uplift *Mohiniyattam* from its ultimate state of malice to the main stream of social arena."To those who questioned his motive and decency, poet Vallathol made a public submission –"Never mind, if the Goddess Herself appears before me with morals on one hand and aesthetics on the other, I would definitely opt for the latter" (Gopalakrishnan, 2014).

At that time, there were only a few families who were associated with the practice of *Mohiniyattam*. Vallathol himself took charge of the tedious job of finding a *Mohiniyattam* teacher for *Kalamandalam*. His attempts went in vain, initially. Some of the regions of the present-day Thrissur and Palakkad had been the locales of some hereditary families that practised *Mohiniyattam* such as: Peringottukurissi, Korattikkara, Pazhayannur Kundalassery, Nelluvaya, Kongodu Lakkidi, Nadavarambu and Chemmanthatta. The women who had learnt this art form in their

childhood were not willing to speak a word about it then.¹⁶³ “For the greed of money they (*Mohiniyattam* Dancers) would even sit on the lap of the viewers and give off any obscene gestures and actions relentlessly (Chathu Nair, 1990). This is how the novel *Meenakshi* circumstantiates the chronicle of *Mohiniyattam* practice of the final years of 19th century. The novel is said to have been a complete reflection of the then society. So, the perceptions about *Mohiniyattam* that are delineated in the novel are reliable. Taking these facts into account, one can assure that no parents of the modern age (those changing times) would have convinced their children to learn and practice *Mohiniyattam*. When Vallathol approached some of the old ladies (who were said to have been former *Mohiniyattam* performers) for this matter, they rejected and their family members felt as if he had shown an indecent-gesture towards them. In this regard, he had also approached some of the early performers of *Mohiniyattam*; Pavukonath Thirungipalli Kuttiyamma, Kothakurissi Ambalampadathu Lakshmiyamma, Panamanna Padiyath Mukambiyamma, Panamanna Ammalu Amma, Pazhayannur Kalipurayath Thathamma and many more. also failed. Later following the suggestion of Eliyangattil Unniraja (Head of the *Kalari* faculty of *Kalamandalam*) Vallathol took a recommendation letter from C N Nambudiri of *Chovur Mana* to approach Orikkaledathu Kalyani Amma. When Kalyani Amma received the recommendation note, she was not in a position to turn down the request. Slowly, she opened the tales of *Mohiniyattam* of yore. She was intimated the major objectives behind the mission of introducing *Mohiniyattam* in *Kalamandalam*. Finally, she consented to join as the faculty and thus, the first *Mohiniyattam Kalari* of *Kalamandalam* came into being in 1932 (Leela Namputhirippadu, 1999).

Kalyani Amma was one of the leading exponents of *Mohiniyattam* during that time. She was in her early 40's when she joined *Kalamandalam*. At the time of joining she performed a few sequences of *Mohiniyattam* at *Kalamandalam*. *Kalamandalam* authorities could also find a *Nattuvan* (male teacher) Korattikkara Appuredath Krishna Paniker to assist Kalyani Amma in practical sessions. (Krishna Panicker joined in *Kalamandalam* in his late 70's. Krishna Paniker on *Ilathalam* (Metallic cymbals) and Madhava Warriar on *Maddale* (A double headed- barrel shaped drum instrument) accompanied her *Mohiniyattam*. Following the traditional modus, the

¹⁶³Speaking of *Mohiniyattam* was a taboo. Because by the time *Mohiniyattam* had become synonymous with prostitution. This aspect is discussed in the fifth chapter in connection with the nobilization of the dance form.

recitation was done by herself, assisted by the *Nattuvanar* during the dance recitals (the practice of vocal support did not exist at that time).

Appointing a dance teacher alone did not resolve the concerns completely. Finding the learner was more onerous task than finding a teacher. At that time parents and elders were not supportive of their children learning *Mohiniyattam* as the collective sensibility of the mass about this art form was loathsome. The first *Mohiniyattam* student (dance student) of *Kalamandalam* was Thankamani, hailed from a family who were tenants of *Manakulam Kovilakam*. It was literally not her decision to join at *Kalamandalam* despite, a suggestion by Manakulam Mukundaraja that the family could not turn down.

The *Kalari* that commenced in 1932 continued the practice till 1935. In 1933, Orikkaledathu Kalyani Amma received an opportunity to perform *Mohiniyattam* outside Kerala, in Mumbai at the invitation of the famous American born Indian Dancer Ragini Devi.¹⁶⁴ Even though she and the accompanying (*Maddale*) artiste did not show considerable interest initially, the remarkable success of the performance pleased them. After a few months the team returned to *Kalamandalam*. It was in 1934 a well-known art critique and playwright of *Kathakali Attakathas*, V Krishnan Thampi visited *Kalamandalam* and watched the dance recital of Kalyani Amma and Thankamani at the invitation of Vallathol. He was slightly more acquainted with the earlier form of *Mohiniyattam* as he had witnessed the performance of a *Mohiniyattam* dancer from Cheranallur, consort of Thiruvitamkoor Aniyar Thirunal Maharaja. His review on Kalyani Amma's performance was a constructive one. He suggested that they renew the *Aharya* aspects such as its costume and hairdo/coiffure (Leela Namputhirippadu, 1999). The necessity for appropriate trainers to develop this form in the institutions was a crucial need then. Alternatives were always thought of and interventions were welcomed. But the most effective approach in this regard was to make use of the other available dance traditions in the institution.

The Incorporation of *Kathakali* Dances in the Dance Curriculum of the Institution

Kalamandalam soon explored the possibility of incorporating *Kathakali* dances in the repertoire of its dance curriculum in the initial phase as there was no

¹⁶⁴ An American born Indian dancer, who took Indian classical art form to the global platform.

teacher appointed as the faculty of *Mohiniyattam* after the first break. It was then, in 1933, *Kalamandalam* students and artistes accompanied Ragini Devi to Mumbai and performed a special dance sequence that had been made out of the essence of *Kathakali*. It was greatly appreciated and accepted by the viewers. Success of the new endeavour prompted *Kalamandalam* faculties to focus their efforts more on the choreography of such *Kathakali dances* and dance productions to perform at many venues in and around India. Udaya Shankar,¹⁶⁵ recognized as the father of Modern dance in India visited *Kalamandalam* in 1931 and he sought training in *Kathakali* for six months under the masters of *Kalamandalam*. On his way back, Vallathol sent a pupil of *Kathakali* from *Kalamandalam*, Valengattu Madhavan along with him. Accompanying Uday Shankar, Madhavan could make many successful performance journeys. The success of such International performance series helped *Kalamandalam* to attain global attention. Valengattu Madhavan rejoined *Kalamandalam* as the faculty (teacher-cum-choreographer) of *Kathakali* dances. *Kathakali* dances or *Kathakali Nrithas* were the dance segments extracted from the *Kathakali* plays. Among them, *Shiva Thandava*- Cosmic dance of Shiva, *Kama Dahana*- burning of Kama (the god of love) and *Mayura Nritha*- Dance of Peacock are much staged and received items. In 1935, Thankamani discontinued her course after her marriage with Guru Gopinath, an alumnus of *Kerala Kalamandalam* and the pioneer of '*Kerala Nadanam*'.¹⁶⁶ Owing to the unavailability of students, *Mohiniyattam Kalari* was shut down for two years and was reopened in 1937. Meanwhile, Korattikara Krishna Paniker had rejoined *Kalamandalam*. In 1937, *Kalamandalam* was fortunate to get a teacher for *Mohiniyattam*, Chomayil Ramankandathu Valappil Madhaviyamma to continue the practice of the art form. All the while, Vallathol made intermittent visits to *Mohiniyattam kalari* at *Kalamandalam* at constant intervals. He made efforts and brought new insights to strengthen *Mohiniyattam* dance technique. He had a keen observation and contributed ideas even to the nuances and intricacies of the art form like the *Rasabhinaya* and hand gestural executions. The two consecutive gaps that occurred in *Mohiniyattam Kalari* of *Kalamandalam* were in the years 1935-1937, 1940-1950 respectively (Killimangalam Vasudevan Namputhirippadu, Interview, Mulamkunnathukavu, 25, March, 2014).

¹⁶⁵Udaya Shankar, Father of Modern Dance in India, Founder director of Almora Centre.

¹⁶⁶*Kerala Nadanam* is a dance form created by Guru Gopinath inculcating the elements of Kathakali and Bharathanatyam.

Teachers Groomed in *Kalamandalam* and the Practice of Dance pedagogy; Continuities and its Concerns

After the intermittent pauses in the teaching practice occasioned by the first instructor, Kalyaniyamma, the *Mohiniyattam Kalari* resumed its activities in 1937 with a batch of five students. Among them Karingamanna Kalyanikuttiyamma (later became the doyenne of *Mohiniyattam*) and Kalamandalam Lakshmi later became much sought-after personalities in the stream of *Mohiniyattam*. They learnt under Krishna Panicker, Madhavan, Chomayil Madhaviyamma in different course of time. Chomayil Madhaviyamma's style of *Mohiniyattam* was not the same of Krishna Panicker. (1989:15). After the retirement of Chomayil Madhaviyamma in 1940, students were taught *Bharathanatyam* and *Kathakali dances* despite fact that they all opted for *Mohiniyattam*. The students were also taught *Kathakali Streevesham* (female role in *Kathakali*) and made their debut in it. Moreover, *Kalamandalam* students received training in *Manipuri* dance by the well-known *Manipuri* Maestro Priya Gopal Singh for around eight months (Ibid). At one level, this period could have been fruitful to the development of the dance form as there were opportunities to make collaborations to produce explorative ideas of creativity. However, *Mohiniyattam* was still in its juvenile phase and no teacher was engaged in the teaching of *Mohiniyattam*. Apparently, the artistic collaborations and other structural modifications failed to grant a prominent place for *Mohiniyattam* during that time.

Until 1950, Dance Dept. of *Kalamandalam* was not capable of conducting full stretched recitals of *Mohiniyattam* and *Bharathanatyam*. It was after ten years of the retirement of Chomayil Madhaviyamma, another *Mohiniyattam* exponent, Thottassery Chinnammu Amma took in charge of the *Mohiniyattam kalari* in *Kalamandalam*. Chinnammu Amma was the disciple of renowned *Nattuvanars* of that time- Kalamozhi Krishna Menon and Krishna Paniker. Kalamozhi Krishna Menon had proved his expertise in both *Mohiniyattam* and *Kaikottikali*. He was addressed by the name *Kalamozhi* after he became an expert in *kaikottikali* segment that appears in '*Subhadraharanam*' (Story of the abduction of Subadra). He had a number of students in *Mohiniyattam* including Chakili Kochukuttiyamma (Killikurissiengalam), Kunnathu Meenakshiyamma (Pazhayannur), Thottassery Parukkuttiyamma (Pazhayannur), Nambalattu Parukkuttiyamma (Pazhayannur), Kalyaniyamma (Peringottukurrissi), Thottassery Chiinammu Amma (Pazhayannur) respectively.

Krishna Menon had learnt *Bharathanatyam* from Tamil Nadu (Leela Namputhirippadu, 1999).

Vallathol made a tedious effort in convincing Chinnammu Amma to join his institute of *Mohiniyattam*. Sensing the urgency of the situation, he entrusted this responsibility to Neelakandan Nambeesan (a faculty of *Kalamandalam*). When Nambeeshan approached Chinnammu Amma, her husband showed great indifference towards the proposal. Finally, on their official declaration that 'the appointment of Chinnammu Amma in *Kalamandalam* will be for teaching alone and not to perform', she consented. It was decided that her monthly remuneration would be twenty rupees. Chinnammu Amma's husband, Madhavan Nair was an artistic curator of dance drama productions. He had curated many programmes at several venues throughout Kerala. Thereafter, Chinnammu Amma served *Kalamandalam* for 15 years. (Sathyabhama, 2014).

Chinnammu Amma had learnt *Mohiniyattam* at an early age. She was not in touch with the art form for a long time after her marriage, and hence she struggled to remember the whole repertoire of the art form. After making immense efforts to recollect the items, she was able to teach five items of *Mohiniyattam* from its earlier repertoire. The items were; *Cholkettu* in raga *Chakravakam*, *Jatiswarams* in ragas, *Chenjriti* and *Thoti*, *Padam 'Entaho Vallabha'* in raga *Mukhari*, *Varnam* in *Telugu-Script* in raga *Yadukulakamboji* respectively. Eventually *Kalamandalam* witnessed a rise in student strength for *Mohiniyattam*. More students and foreign researchers began to approach *Kalamandalam* to explore its educational value.¹⁶⁷ A Pennsylvanian dancer and scholar Betty True Jones who was the one who initially conduct a research study upon *Mohiniyattam* joined *Kalamandalam* in 1959 and learnt *Mohiniyattam* under Chinnammu Amma for five years (Killimangalam, Interview, Mulamkunnathukavu, 25, March, 2014; Surendran & Unnikrishnan, 1989:26). In 1950's *Kalamandalam's Nritta Kalari* and Ladies Hostel was relocated to Cheruthuruthy in a rented building of Koladi Raman Menon. Besides teaching, Chinnammu Amma teacher also administrated the hostel as its Warden. The students of Chinnammu Amma included *Kalamandalam Sathyabhama*, *Hymavathi Kollaykkal* from Pambadi, *Clara* from Thiruvilumala, *Banumati* from Thrissur and

¹⁶⁷Foreign students such as the pioneering authors of South Asian- performance studies Philip Zarilli, Betty True Jones and Clifford Jones worked at *Kalamandalam* during this period.

Vidyavinodini from Madras. Except Sathyabhama, the other four students who had enrolled as full-time students were provided with stipend (Sathyabhama, 2014). Simplicity, sophisticated-culture, slow-paced rhythm and the noble execution of *Abhinaya* were the characteristics of Chinnammu Amma's *Mohiniyattam* presentation. It is no exaggeration to say that these valuable aspects laid the foundation for the present-day *Kalamandalam* school of *Mohiniyattam*.¹⁶⁸

As part of the sophistication of the art form Vallathol insisted the faculties to discard the *Desi* segments of the art form such as; *Mukkuthi*, *Motiram*, *Kalabha Koothu* and many more. (for more details, refer to the urbanization of *Mohiniyattam* and the notion of 'Classical' in the second section of the fifth chapter). The indecent and obscene aspects in the repertoire were discarded and further enriched with the original simplistic culture of its former state. Vallathol imposed certain values and merit criterion on the art form to develop and enhance its nobility and credibility. Vallathol had reinvented the folk style of dance *Panthattam* and transcended into *Mohiniyattam*. He himself wrote the verses for this endeavour. However, it is not included in the repertoire of *Kalamandalam* today. Killimangalam, Interview, Mulamkunnathukavu, 25, March, 2014; Surendran & Unnikrishnan, 1989:18). He made the teachers and students of *Kalamandalam* more aware of the logical aspects of the dance. This effort could also be read in a different perspective.¹⁶⁹

In the performance arena, *Nattuvanars* used to walk behind the dancer in order to give rhythmic assistance with small cymbals and mnemonic syllables. This practice was disregarded by Vallathol who made the entire accompanying artistes group including the *Nattuvanar* sit on the right side of the dancer facing her. Vallathol could successfully include a vocal musician for the performance and thus lessening the burden of dancer doing the recitals by herself. He replaced *Thoppi Maddale* (a variety of *Maddale* with high pitch sound) with *Mridangam* and encouraged the artistes to follow more of Carnatic Music.

In such a way a set of individuals with different skill sets were incorporated into the scheme to impact *Mohiniyattam* training as the institutional setup had grown.

¹⁶⁸ Sophistication of the art form had happened in *Kalamandalam* as part of the standardisation or elitization of the society. This phenomenon also had *smriti*-influenced ethos played on the same.

¹⁶⁹ This aspect is dealt with in detail in the fifth chapter.

The most important factor which bound them together was the notion of informal learning from the '*Gurumugham*' (from the Master directly). This reasserted the traditional *Gurukula Sampradaya* as a system in the institution. Along with these modifications, the possibilities of modern education methodologies like curriculum development and up-gradations in the practicum sessions were also explored. As a sample, the initial modification of the curriculum has been discussed in the following section.

Curriculum of Dance Department during the 1950's

"The routine of *Kalamandalam* was rigorous and exacting" (Surendran & Unnikrishnan, 1989:16). During these years, classes used to begin at 7 am in the morning. During that time, masters Achutha Warriar and Krishnan Kutty Warriar held the sessions till 8 am. And after the breakfast, they had *Mohiniyattam* and *Bharathanatyam* practicum till 12 'O' clock. The morning practicum session was followed by classes for language and literature held by scholars like Elayath, Killimangalam Vasudevan Namputhirippadu and so on. The literature class was not mandatory in the beginning except for the pupils who failed in the upper primary school. The Warriar Masters used to take *Bharathanatyam* classes. *Alarippu* in *Hamsadhwani raga*, *Jatiswaras* in *Kalyani raga* and *Ragamalika*, *Shabdham* in *Ragamalika*, *Varna* in *Ananda Bhairavi*, *Padams* in *Thoti raga*, *Padam* in *Vasanta raga*, *Thillana* in *Vasanta raga* were the *Bharathanatyam* items that had been taught at *Kalamandalam* by the Warriar Masters (Sathyabhama & Lathika, 2014). At the same time, Chinnammu Amma teacher taught them *Cholkettu* in *Chakravakam raga*, *Jatiswaras* in *Thoti* and *Chenjurutti*, *Varna* in *Yadukulakamboji*, *Padams* in *Asaveri* and *Suruti* and many more. One of the *Padams* '*Indaliha Valarunnu*' taught by Chinnammamma in raga *Suruti* was not clear. Although Sathyabhama teacher made an attempt to re-choreograph the item, she could not materialise her effort. *Mohiniyattam* classes in *Kalamandalam* were not held on a regular basis, as the portions in the syllabus were inadequate (Leela Namputhirippadu, 1999; Sathyabhama & Lathika, 2014; Killimangalam Vasudevan Namputhirippadu, Interview, Mulamkunnathukavu, 25, March, 2014). Thereafter, a master known as 'Rajaratnam' from Selam District of Tamil Nadu joined *Kalamandalam*. Owing to his expertise in folk dance forms, he contributed a few items to the dance repertoire of *Kalamandalam* such as *Pambattinritta*, *Mayil Nritta*, *Manipuri* and so on. (Sathyabhama &

Lathika,2014). Apart from learning *Kathakali nrittas*, (as part of their formal syllabus) students of Dance: Kalyanikuttiyamma, Sathyabhama and Hymavathi. had learnt aspects of Kathakali directly from the maestros like Pattikkamthodi Ravunni Menon¹⁷⁰, Kalamandalam Padmanabhan Nair¹⁷¹, Kalamandalam Ramankutty Nair¹⁷² and so on. Vallathol happily allowed and encouraged them to benefit from such additional classes besides the syllabus. They had also done their debut of *Kathakali* at *Kalamandalam* under the guidance of *Kathakali* Masters. This opened up new vistas for learning and strengthened the development of individualistic ideas among the dance students. Their exposure to other dance styles added depth to their understanding of the teaching-learning process since the early 1950's.

First Outward-Journey of Kalamandalam Repertory

The first foreign trip of *Kalamandalam* repertory was made in 1954. The tour was organized to Malaysia and Singapore. They started from Madras harbour where they spent about one month and had staged numerous performances in Singapore and Malaysia. Artistes participated in the *Kathakali* performance tour were, Neelakandan Nambeesan, Raman Kutty Nair, Padmanabhan Nair, Krishnan Kutty Pothuval, Appukkutty Pothuval, Sivaraman Nair and so on. While, the artistes of *Mohiniyattam* who joined them were Kalamandalam Sathyabhama and Kalamandalam Hymavathy. The dance numbers staged in the tour were a *Mohiniyattam Varna*, 'Swami Ninne Nammithira' in *Yadukulakamboji*, *Padam* 'Entaho Vallabha' in *Asaveri raga*, *Bharathanatyam Varna* 'Sakhiye Intha Velayil' in *Ananda Bhairavi raga*, *Bharathanatyam Padams* 'Kalai Thooki', 'Thaye Yashoda' etc. There were no musicians to work for dance, so when one performer was on stage the other one helped with music and sometimes Padams were sung by Krishnan Kutty Pothuval (*Kathakali* musician) and in spite of Mridangam, Appukkutty Pothuval gave the slight rhythmic support in *Maddale* (Sathyabhama, AIR Interview, 20, April, 2014).

Performing in a foreign soil and sharing the roles in the shows synergized these budding teachers of *Mohiniyattam* traditions. This was a deviation from following a single Guru to an ensemble work. The materialization of training in the supporting aspects of music and staging had been an asset to the students of the

¹⁷⁰Pioneering guru of *Kathakali*, who nurtured *Kathakali* at *Kalamandalam*.

¹⁷¹Disciple of Pattikamthodi Ravunni Menon. Pioneering guru of *Kathakali* who greatly supported to rejuvenate *Mohiniyattam*. He is the spouse of Kalamandalam Sathyabhama.

¹⁷²Pioneering *Kathakali* Guru of *Kalamandalam*. Disciple of Pattikamthodi Ravunni Menon.

institution. It gave rise to the appointment of specific teachers for music education.

Appointment of Dance and Music Faculties in *Kalamandalam*

In the beginning, there was no faculty engaged in the vocal section of *Mohiniyattam* (Carnatic Music Faculty also hasn't been implemented at that time). Until, then the modus operandi was to invite outside musicians for accompanying the dance recitals. It was in 1955, three masters were appointed as the music and percussion faculty in *Kalamandalam*. The music artists who joined there were Rajalakshmi (Carnatic Music), Vasudeva Paniker (Violin) and Ramakrishna Ayyer (Mridangam). From this point of time *Mohiniyattam* in *Kalamandalam* firmed its musical pedagogy into the Carnatic system of Music. Arunachalam, a *Bharathanatyam* Maestro hailed from Tamil Nadu (friend of Rajaratnam Master) joined *Kalamandalam* and worked there for a while. He taught few *Bharathanatyam* items to the dance students of *Kalamandalam*. That's how *Jatiswara* in *Bhairavi*, *Varna* in *Bhairavi*, *Thillana* in *Kanada* were included in the repertoire of *Kalamandalam*. It will be helpful to have a look at the contributions of individual teachers in the initial phases of the institutionalization of *Mohiniyattam*. But the scanty data only restrict the researcher to make the information in a table. Please see the appendix for the table. The table itself shows how constructive was the learning environment in the institution where multiple specializations which could strengthen the dance were available under one roof. Still it was lacking its visibility among the people of Kerala. A Govt. funded programme to showcase the talent and disseminate the idea about the institution was a boon for Vallathol in the early stages itself.

Domestic Performances and Tours in 1957

By the mid of 1950's, 57 N E S Blocks (Kerala Panchayat Blocks) were formed all over Kerala. From April 1957 *Kalamandalam* had performed through the Blocks from Kasaragod to Parasala. During this time, Killimangalam Vasudevan Nampoothiri was in charge of the programme as supervisor. This performance series helped *Kalamandalam* to spread its reputation among the mass vivaciously. Artistes and Masters participated in this performance-series were Chinnammu Amma, Rajalakshmi, Vasudeva Paniker, Ramakrishna Iyer, Thankamani, Leela, Subadra, Elizebeth, Shailaja and so on. The numbers included in the performance repertoire were from *Bharathanatyam*, *Mohiniyattam* and Folk-dance forms (Killimangalam

Vasudevan namputhirippadu, Interview, Mulamkunnathukavu, 25, March, 2014). A dance production titled '*Kerala Santana Sammelanam*'¹⁷³ conceived and scripted by Vallathol, composed by Vasudeva Paniker and choreographed by master Kumaran Nair was also performed (Kalamandalam Leelamma, Interview, Athani, 17, March, 2016).

Initially, the agenda of the institute was to accommodate people from any class and communities. However, nobody from the downtrodden communities is said to have joined *Kalamandalam* during that time. Even though, Vallathol had conceived and presented the idea of democratizing the art through his work '*Kerala Santana Sammelanam*' it did not really match with his social and artistic endeavours. '*Good looking girl with fair complexion*' has been the major criterion for the candidates to join the institute.¹⁷⁴ The notion is still prevalent in the present ambience of the institute. The actual intake of pupils from the downtrodden classes started from the time of Eyankode Sreedharan's secretary-ship at *Kalamandalam* in 1990's. He was constantly questioned by the patrons of the society and the institute for these endeavours. He authored and directed '*Manava Vijayam*', a socially relevant play in Kathakali. Even though it is considered as one of the land-marking points in the history of art and society, it was not that successful as the art forms and its spectatorship were shrunk to the privileged ambience of feudalism (Refer to the fifth chapter for Spectatorship of *Mohiniyattam*). Owing to many reasons, the institution had changed its locations at various points of time to different places in Thrissur. A table will enunciate those changed locations and times of the shifts. Please refer to the appendix no.4.

'Institutionalization' of traditional art forms could be a process of replantation which requires high attention and foresightedness, because the whole set of ideas and practice of the traditional art form is being replanted to some other context which is alien to the existing practice of tradition. Vallathol and other academic professionals of the institute successfully incorporated the traditional forms into the modern setting of institutionalization. The time schedule and practicum models underwent constant revisions with respect to the panel discussions of the institute. Thereby, *Mohiniyattam*

¹⁷³The dance production discussed about the social stability and uniformity by characterizing female characters from diverse community backdrops of Kerala.

¹⁷⁴ According to a number of alumni of *Kalamandalam*. They had revealed this untold criterion in the interview given to the researcher.

was not only achieving the pedagogical characteristics but also developing the *combinational ideas of creativity*.¹⁷⁵ A brief look at the crux points of the teaching methodologies of *Mohiniyattam* which have been applied at different settings and contexts of the society is appropriate for a proper perception of the development of *Mohiniyattam* pedagogy of Kerala.

Dance teaching in Kerala; *Puraskaranam* to Institutionalization (A diagrammatic representation)

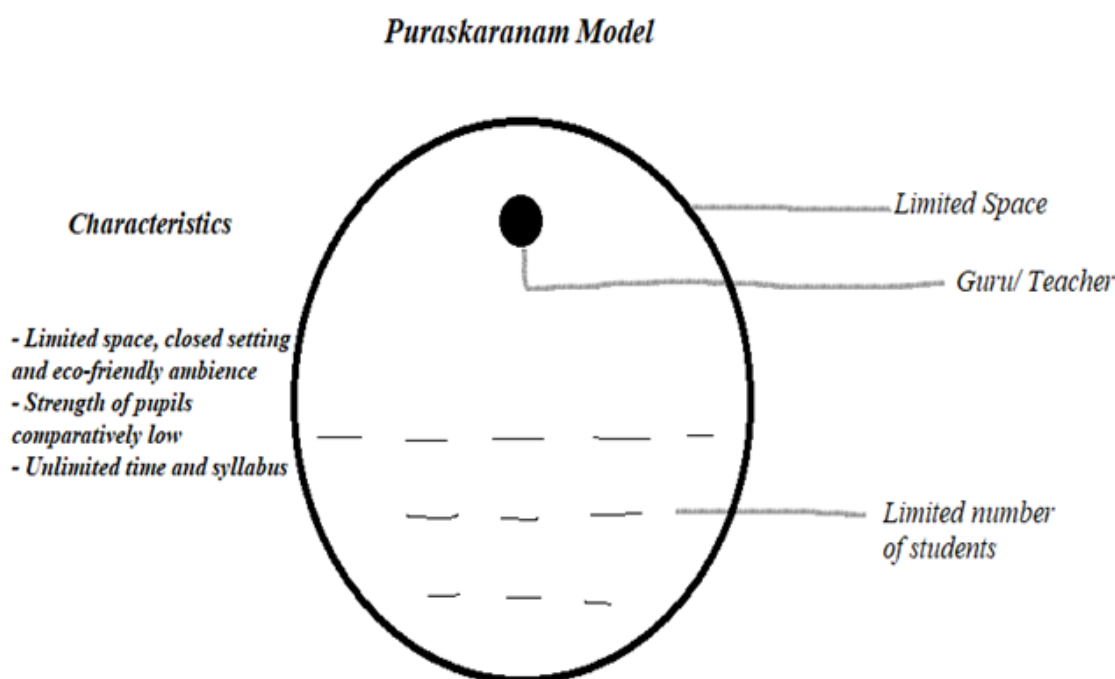


Plate no: 3.1

[Diagram Note: This diagram denotes the *puraskaranam* Model of the *Mohiniyattam* pedagogy. The circle indicates the *Kalari* (the space of the practice). The big dot inside is to emphasise the single Guru. Small horizontal lines indicate the strength of disciples in the *Kalari*.]

Puraskaranam is an ancient tradition of teaching that was prevalent in Kerala (M V Narayanan, Interview, Puranattukara, 08, March, 2014). In the institution of *Puraskaranam*, the teacher is invited to the student's home where his or her family makes an arrangement for *Kalari* (practice-space) and accommodation for the teacher. Teacher resides at student's house and teaches the lessons at his convenience. There was no limit for the teaching lessons and timings. The *Guru-Shishya* relationship was

¹⁷⁵ Unusual combination of usual ideas. (based on Margaret Boden, (2011). *Creativity and Art: Three roads to surprise*.) <https://www.slideshare.net/eelcodenheijer/ai-creativity-and-generative-art>

also much intense than that of today. Guru had immense role in *Shishya*'s life, both personal and professional. *Shishya* saw his/her Guru as the authoritative source of his life. Thus 'Fear' was a prominent factor in this institution. 'Making of a performer' had always been a slow-paced, and painstaking journey. *Shishya* learns *Kalari*-lessons from *Guru-Mugham* (from the *Guru* directly). He/she never tries to disobey *Guru-Vakk* (word of the *Guru*). He/she always fears *Guru-Shapam* (Curse of the *Guru*). He/she works hard for earning *Guru-Kadaksham* (Blessings of the *Guru*). These terms used to rule over a student's life until he/she is into this traditional art.

Since the beginning, the pedagogy of *Mohiniyattam* has been indebted to the other performing art traditions of Kerala like; *Kalaripayattu*, *Kathakali*, *Kutiyattam* and many more. Even though *Puraskaranam* was a strong methodology to inculcate the craft of the dance into the students, it did not help *Mohiniyattam* to grow into such glory as *Kathakali* and other forms. Because it was associated with women, the male chauvinist ideology had been attached to it. But the methodology of *Puraskaranam* was however re-established when the gurus started promoting individual learning system.

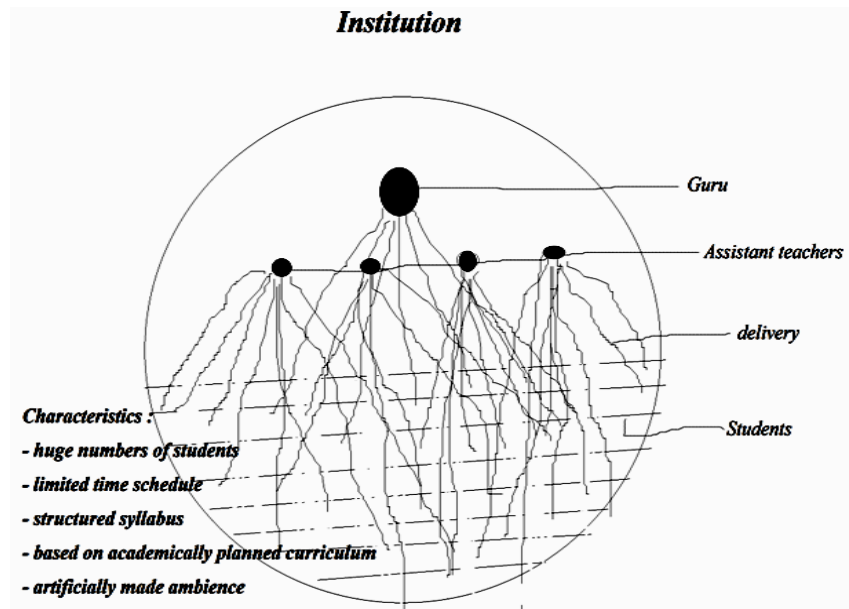


Plate No: 3.2

[Diagram Note: The diagram represents the model of Institutional pedagogy of *Mohiniyattam*. The circle signifies the dance teaching space of the institute. The above given single dot characterises the principal *Guru* of the institute and the minor dots represent the assistant teachers of the institute. The horizontal lines indicate the strength of pupils. The down flown lines denote the complication of the class delivery as different teachers take same subject to the same students.]

Institutional pedagogy of *Mohiniyattam* began to take shape as a preventive movement against the deterioration of the form under the colonial influences. During the time of its establishment, there was no sound practice for *Mohiniyattam*. And as a direct consequence of this, the institution lacked some essential aspects of the original practice. However, *Mohiniyattam* was inculcated into the curriculum of the institute later in reference to the teaching system of other institutionalised forms. However, it is not similar to the former system of practice. Under the institution, there are many grades of chambers, led by different grades of teachers. Moreover the strength of students is remarkably high. Practice time is limited to the time phrase that has been scheduled in the curriculum of the course. Practical aspects often lack prime importance in the class rooms as many subsidiary aspects are being taught simultaneously. All these factors critically affect the over-all productivity of the institute. Teacher-student relationship could not be that strong and intensive, compared to the traditional one. The setting, interest of the student, other mental preparations required for the students are all generated in a recreated ambience. Thus, the natural out-come of a traditional pedagogic application is likely to be absent in this present setting of the institutional system of dance teaching.

Conclusion

During the age of *Thevadissi Attam* / *Thevadichi Attam*, the dance form had been sought with great respect, later in the post phase of its decline after Swathi's demise, it was known under the same title, but looked at with great aversion. Initially, *Thevadichi*, the colloquial term received the respect of '*Deva Pada Dasi*,' Servant of God, and, with the passage of time under the social stigma the term began to acquire a derogatory sense and became synonymous with '*Veshya*' (Prostitute). This chapter discussed the evolution of *Mohiniyattam* in different stages from *Swathi's* court to this era's institutionalised space. It touched upon the rise and the fall of *Mohiniyattam* in a meticulous manner.

Many dancers and scholars tend to hold a vague opinion that medieval era was a golden age of *Mohiniyattam*. Hence it is crucial to subject this point to scrutiny. Moreover, it raises an important concern-for whom had *Mohiniyattam* been a golden fruit during the age of feudalism? Undoubtedly it was for the feudal chieftains and their co-men. How did they propagate the form? Or in which way did they utilize this form? We cannot forsake everything which history reveals about this. To a great

extent, *Mohiniyattam* had been a mere sexual entertainment for the feudal chieftains. There are also people who uphold the value of feudalism and attach it to the development-history of *Mohiniyattam*.¹⁷⁶ However, the royal support of Travancore planted the stem-cell to re-invoke the life of this art form from its pathetic state of early feudal age. Contributions of Swathi Thirunal bestowed a fatherly-care to this art form. It might have been a golden threshold for the female dancing form to become spiritfuf. Early departure of Swathi Thirunal deeply affected the life of the dance form. Thereof once again, *Mohiniyattam* dissipated into a state of abeyance. Social acceptance of this form was muted out for more than 80 years. Later, the malpractices associated with this art form were reinstated.

The thought of rejuvenating *Mohiniyattam* did not occur in the mind of Vallathol when he embarked on the mission of starting an art-institution. Infact, it was the sad state of the art form *Kathakali* that provoked him to take the decision of making such an art-guild. Later in 1932, after two years of the formal establishment, he brought *Mohiniyattam* into his Institution. Thus, the chronological incidents happened in the growth of these art forms (*Kathakali* and *Mohiniyattam*) including its decline and rise are so accurate and mutually dependant.¹⁷⁷

The shifting set of the pedagogic patterns and its differentiation have also been discussed in this chapter. Even though the idea of *Puraskaranam* and Institutionalization belong to different times and spaces, it is crucial that some of the characteristics of *Puraskaranam* have to be brought into the practice of institutionalised pedagogy. Institutes like *Kalamandalam* which upheld the characteristics of traditional pedagogic values earlier, are increasingly losing such values and qualities in accordance with the changing times. It is high time that one should grasp the characteristics and qualities of *Puraskaranam* and re-establish them in the present setting of dance learning.

¹⁷⁶It could be just a way to deny the role and the influence of the other subaltern folk cultures on *Mohiniyattam*. Acknowledging the folk especially the backward people's influence, may question their privilege on this art form.

¹⁷⁷Decline of *Mohiniyattam* at Travancore royal court in the beginning of 19th century, propagated *Kathakali* well. Again, the dead-knell of *Kathakali* that happened due to the fall of landlordism and its economic crisis in the dawn of 20th century made Vallathol to bring back *Mohiniyattam* to the social scenario to support and uplift the dying *Kathakali* and his institution.

CHAPTER 4

SCHOOLS OF *MOHINIYATTAM*: ROOTS, SAPLINGS AND BRANCHES

Even though, the pedagogy of *Mohiniyattam* at present is structured and systematic, its growth in *Kalamandalam* had not been in the conventional way of curriculum-development where the practicum is prepared with designed modules and schedules. Rather, the development was non-anticipatory or natural as mentioned earlier. Thus, some creative models such as *combinational* and *exploratory*¹⁷⁸ were adapted for explaining the formation of *Mohiniyattam* pedagogy.¹⁷⁹ In the initial phase, movement repository of *Mohiniyattam* was inadequate. It was the conjoined effort of dance masters, literary scholars and stalwarts of the field that led to the introduction of a new module for teaching in the curriculum of the institution (Kalamandalam Sathyabhama, AIR Interview, 20, April 2014; Killimangalam Vasudevan Namputhirippadu, Interview, Mulamkunnathukavu, 25, March, 2014).

Initially, the practicum of *Mohiniyattam* had not been given considerable attention in *Kalamandalam*. During that period, it was *Bharathanatyam* lessons that had been dealt with utmost importance. Later in 1950s *Mohiniyattam* started accumulating new vistas in both streams of performance and practice under the institutionalised ambience. Once it got restructured, *Mohiniyattam* has become the central core in the productions and presentations of *Kalamandalam*. From there onwards, artistes started experimenting with different themes and movement ideas in *Mohiniyattam*.

As opposed to the notion of viewing institution as the ultimate authority, it is the idea of the individual that gets prominence in the field of *Mohiniyattam*. Most of the present-day dancers, except a few, would like to place a greater stress on the names of the established teachers rather than acknowledging the institutions.¹⁸⁰ It is the conception and the idea of individual artistes that had sprouted into the development of the form, whether under an institution or any private guilds of art. This sort of influences turned the individual ideas into varied schools of practice. The

¹⁷⁸These are the creativity models developed by Margaret Bodden (2004).

¹⁷⁹ This aspect will be discussed later in connection with the analysis of major pedagogic constructs of *Mohiniyattam*. see the subtitle “Disintegration-Models of pedagogy conceived and conceptualised by the major schools of *Mohiniyattam*”.

¹⁸⁰ Information is collected from the participant observation of the researcher.

stylistic variations and adaptation of different cultures differentiated their craft from each other. There are four established schools of *Mohiniyattam* which are widely being followed by the learners of *Mohiniyattam* today.

An Umbrella Unfolds: School of Kalyanikuttiyamma

Kalamandalam Kalyanikuttiyamma is a name that has received wide acclaim in Kerala in the field of *Mohiniyattam*. She is respectfully known as the *Tharavattamma* (Grand-Mother) of *Mohiniyattam*. Karingamanna Kalyanikuttiyamma belonged to the second batch of students (1937) of *Kerala Kalamandalam*. She had pursued her studies of *Mohiniyattam* under the tutelage of Chomayil Madhaviyamma and Nattuvan Krishna Paniker from 1937 to 1940. After Swathi Thirunal and Vallathol, a name that has been much discussed in association with the rejuvenation of *Mohiniyattam* was that of Kalyanikuttiyamma.

Kalyanikuttiyamma was born in an orthodox family in Malapuram district of Kerala in 1913. Since her childhood, she had been spirited with radical ideas and thoughts. She had grown up questioning the inequalities of women and arguing for the women rights. Kalyanikuttiyamma even underwent the training in *Yoga* and *Kalaripayattu* for some time in her pre-teens. She started penning poems, stories and dramas right from her early girlhood. All these characteristics of her persona turned out to be productive in the development of *Mohiniyattam* eventually. Initially, she came in contact with Vallathol in order to take some references on the Sanskrit literature for her '*Malayalam Vidwan*' examination. However, as a boon to *Mohiniyattam* the 22-year-old woman happily followed the suggestion of Vallthol that she may take up and study the art form.

She was actually hesitant to join *Kalamandalam* as she was not maintaining an accurate body weight. When she joined the institute, the then tutor of the institute, Madhavan assured her that "she need have no worries about excessive weight: that would soon be taken care of. True enough within six months, thanks to a routine of tough exercises he got her into proper physical shape" (Surendran & Unnikrishnan, 1989:16). (This incident indicates nothing but the firmness and finesse that the training system of Kalamandalam had possessed during that period). Under Krishna Panicker, she learnt *Cholkettu*, *Jatiswaram* in *raga Kambhoji*, *Varnam* in *raga Yadukulakambhoji* and *Thillana* in *raga, Arabhi*. (Her family stopped her from

joining Kalamandalam for learning *Mohiniyattam*. But she was firm in her decision. Because of her keen interest in the art form, she could not even attend her sister's wedding.) She had her debut of *Mohiniyattam* in 1939 which was held at *Kalamandalam* in the presence of meritorious personalities of the society. In 1940, she was married to Kalamandalam Krishnan Nair and the couple left *Kalamandalam* the same year. After leaving her alma-mater, she joined the school established by Guru Gopinath in Trivandrum in 1941. In 1944, she started teaching *Mohiniyattam* at her own dance school at Sreemoolanagaram. She taught *Mohiniyattam* in a school at Chalakkudy in Thrissur district in 1950. In 1952, they moved to Aluva and established a school. They had to move again to Tripunithura in 1958, when Krishnan Nair got appointed as a faculty of *Kathakali* at RLV Institute, Tripunithura. She had the opportunity to explore the dance form extensively as she taught at different places inside and outside Kerala. She had taught *Mohiniyattam* in *Darpana*, Ahamedabad in the year 1954 and in 1974, as a part of a government funded fellowsip, she could associate with *Kalakshetra*, Aydyar and teach *Mohiniyattam* to many young and aspiring teachers. She had also taught *Mohiniyattam* in *Nrityagram* established by Protima Gauri Bedi, for a while. (Venkitaraman, 1989:17). Her explorations and engagement with different tastes and culture could have provided her insights to develop and strengthen the cord of *Mohiniyattam*. The poetic quality along with the psychomotor competence which she had acquired in her childhood, were employed successfully in her creative endeavours. These qualities helped her immensely to become an accomplished figure in the field of *Mohiniyattam*.

Artistic Endeavours, Contributions and Choreographies

The plight of the decayed structure of *Mohiniyattam* troubled her immensely. This forced her to find a new set of alphabets for the existing movement-repository of *Mohiniyattam* (Kala Vijayan, Channel Interview, 24, Feb, 2017). She undertook the study of dance movements through an ethnographic survey that had been centred on the temples and the abodes of dancing women of Kerala. She then formulated new *Adavus* based on the culture and character of the art form and also composed the mnemonic syllables pertaining to them. She classified the set of *Adavus* into four predominant categories and named them in accordance with the sounding of the syllables: *Taganam*, *Jaganam*, *Dhaganam*, *Sammisram* and so on. She also created the set of *Tirmana Adavus*. Later she attempted at rearranging the isolated themes of

the repertoire in a systematic order. Thus, she made the performance repertoire of *Mohiniyattam* into a 'two and a half hours concert', that includes the traditional numbers-*Cholkettu*, *Jatiswaram*, *Varnam*, *Padam*, *Thillana*, *Shlokam*, *Saptham* and so on. She wrote two *Varnams* and choreographed about twelve *Padams*, two *Thillanas*, three *Shlokhas* and two *Saptams*. She had also choreographed four dance dramas.

Saptam has been a predominant item of *Mohiniyattam* repertoire at present. The word implies 'seven', thus *saptham* is the seventh one of the repertoire. It was a forgotten piece until Kalyanikuttiyamma revived it from the blurred ideas she had learnt from her guru Krishna Panikkar. He gave her only the vocal idea of the item. He was also not in a state to remember the actual practice of the same. Kalyanikuttiyamma could successfully revamp it through her creativity and experience of the form.

The identity of *Saptam* in the repertoire of *Mohiniyattam* still bears the mark of a revolution.¹⁸¹ *Saptam* is a revived aspect of *Mohiniyattam* which has been revamped from the state of oblivion. But many of the masters of other schools deny accepting it as a reality. However, if it is presented in the repertoire of present day's *Mohiniyattam* with such vibrancy, it points to the potential and the firmness of its creator and her school. The existence of the *Saptam* also indicates that *Mohiniyattam* could flexibly accept new editions. But it should rekindle the spirit of the tradition. Moreover, it reveals how a guru can transfer the knowledge sheerly through the orality to his own disciple which proves the kind of telepathy that works amidst them in the revival and recreation of an item. Kalyanikuttiyamma grasped the nuances of *Saptam* from her teacher Krishna Panicker and she herself materialised it into a performative form. *Saptam* was traditionally an item which could be performed for more than an hour. "The questioning mind of Kalyanikuttiyamma, who had also the benefit of what Krishna Panicker had told her, persuaded her to delete from the *Cholkettu*, the lines relating to Rama from *Jaya jaganta giri-samadheera...* to *Langeswara balapahaara*. Instead, she added a few other appropriate lines and *Jatis* and reconstructed the *saptam* which is an important item taught in her school" (Surendran& Unnikrishnan,1989:18). *Saptam*, as conceived by Kallyanikuttiyamma,

¹⁸¹The arguments on authority stayed as a blockade for new creative models of Mohiniyattamchoreographies. Thus, these new creative models are always being questioned in the field, irrespective of who does it.

is the story of triumph (Kalyanikuttiyamma, 1992). The idea of triumph needs to be highlighted here as it is the final item of the repertoire and how interestingly it allows the *Mohiniyattam* recital to conclude with such positivism.

To break the notion of orthodox rendition of *rasas* (*Sringara* and its further characters) she wrote and choreographed a new *Padam* (*Varika varika sakhi... ‘o’* dear come) which constitutes all *rasas* of the histrionics (Sreedevi Rajan & Smitha Rajan, Sahapedia Interview, 15, Feb, 2015). This *Padam* was set into raga *Ananda Bhairavi* and *tala Adi*, and Sree Krishna marked the heroic presence. It incorporates *rasas* contextually from *Rasaraja Sringara* to *Santa*. It was then a novel approach to improvise the performance-text, breaking the clichéd usages of *Pada* songs of Maharaja Swathi Thirunal and IrayimmanThampi. Among aplenty items of her choreography, the frequently staged choreographies with rare patterns were *Rama Saptham*, *Siva Saptham*, *Ata Tala Varnam* in *Raga Sankarabharanam*, *Tisra gati truputa Thillana* in *Sankarabharanam* and various *Kirthanas* of Swathi Thirunal. She has nobilized (standardised) the art of *Mohiniyattam* to a great extent. Because during that time *Mohiniyattam* was undergoing a ridiculous phase in the society. To mark *Mohiniyattam* as a decent practice, she attached such norms and policies to the practice. Like; “A *Mohiniyattam* dancer should smile the ‘Smitha’ pattern (the slight smile without opening the lips).” “Hip movement has to be avoided completely.” “The posture, *Aramandala* has to be kept in the distance of two and half *Angulas*.”¹⁸² However, these kinds of strict rules could have emerged from the male idea of the Malayali noble woman. Even though it is said that since childhood she had been a radical and thought-provoking girl who had always envisioned and worked for the emancipation of Malayali women from the state of domestication, it did not reflect much in her approach towards the art form. The nobilisation of the performativity of *Mohiniyattam* might have been a need for the then society (Kalamandalam Sugandhi, Interview, Kalamassery, 25, Oct, 2015; Kalamandalam Leelamma, Interview, Athani, 17, March, 2016). Otherwise the dance form would not have even existed. She systematised and established *Mohiniyattam* in the society by her extensive research and adaptation of various practice models to its performativity.

¹⁸²Information are collected from the participant and non-participant observations of the researcher as she being a learner of the form.

She referred the *Lakshanagrandhas* extensively to make exercisable patterns of movements in *Mohiniyattam*. She also found that dichotomies of *Lakshana Grandhas* cannot be applied completely to the performing text of *Mohiniyattam* as some of them were not suitable for the body language of the art form. Hence, she departed from some technical phrases of *Lakshana Grandha* and proposed new performance principles that resonated well with the art form. She was the one who initiated the utilization of *Balaramabharatham* into the pedagogy and practice of *Mohiniyattam* for the first time (Sreedevi Rajan & Smitha Rajan, Sahapedia Interview, 15, Feb, 2015). “She believed that *Natyasastra* and *Abhinaya Darpana* were the authentic treatises to explore the theory of *Mohiniyattam* except for the *Hastha mudras*” (Dhananjayan, 1993:54). As said earlier, she also worked at *Darpana Academy*, Ahmedabad (established in 1949 by Mrinalini Sarabhai) in 1954. The scope of intercultural creative explorations of dance that unfurled there, could not be avoided in this context. This intercultural ambience might have influenced the dancer in her. Thus, her efforts in correcting the *Telugu* literature of traditional *Mohiniyattam* numbers could be perceived as a sign of this exposure. As veteran guru of *Kuchipudi*, C R Acharyalu was also teaching at *Darpana* during that time, his trailblazing persona of creativity, influenced her ethos as a dance teacher in an inevitable way. She created an organized-body of *Mohiniyattam* syllabus to strengthen the pedagogical system. Her teaching modules are called *Kalari Paatangal*, which is described in detail below.

***Kalari Paatangal* / Practical lessons**

Preliminary Exercises

- 1) **Exercises for neck:** Up and down vertical movement of the neck, bow movement of the neck touching ears to the shoulders, horizontal movement of the neck towards the end of its mobility, horizontal-eight-shaped (figure) movement of the neck done with the chin, and the rotating movement of the neck and so on are the five types of movements assigned to the neck.
- 2) **Exercises for waist:** The torso bending downwards with palms touching on the ground on *Samapada* (feet together), backward bending arch position, corner bending of the torso touching each knee separately and so on are the exercises designed for the torso.

3) **Exercises for hands:** Separate movement of the minor limbs of hands: shoulders, elbows, wrists, and fingers, sideways waving of the hands, downward waving of the hands with feet apart and torso faces down and so on are the exercises for the hands.

4) **Exercises for legs:**

a) Standing on the toes from the out-turned position of the feet, and sitting gradually in *Aramandalam* with the feet positioning the same and coming back to the former position by depending the toes with heels raised up. (Plate no. 4.1)

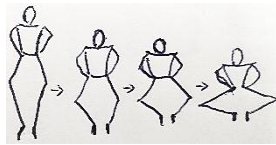


Plate no. 4.1

b) Sitting on the split position of legs (Plate no.4.2)



Plate no. 4.2

c) Pressing the forepart of the foot on the floor with heel raised in *Muzhumandalam*, with the other leg stretched to the respective side with toe opened up. Hands to be held together in front of the chest. (Plate no. 4.3)



Plate no. 4.3

d) From the above discussed position, put the right knee down when left is stretched aside and left hand to touch the ground on the right side. (Plate no. 4.4)



Plate no. 4.4

e) Waving of the legs to the sides separately. (Plate no. 4.5)

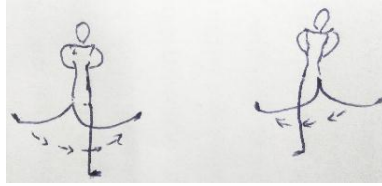


Plate no. 4.5

f) Waving of the legs to the front and touching the big toe of the feet with hands.

(Plate no. 4.6)

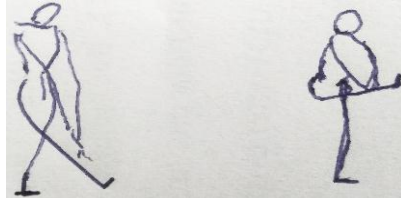


Plate no. 4.6

g) Jumping on the toes by standing and sitting. (Plate no. 4.7)

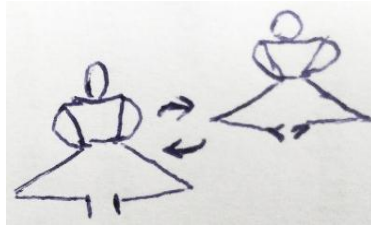


Plate no. 4.7

The Basic Posture of *Mohiniyattam* in Kalyanikuttiyamma-School is defined by the proprietor of the school as:

“Randangulamidamvittu

KuthikaalVachukondaho

MukkonakruthiyilPaada-

YugmamNilavinullathaam.” (Kalyanikuttiyamma, 1992)

‘*Nilavu*’ is the position where the heels are departed in a gap of two inches and the feet are positioned in a triangular pattern. ‘*Nilavu*’ is of four types:

- 1) *Kaal Mandalam*: Bending knees quarterly downwards from the *Sama* posture of *Nilavu*



Plate no. 4.8

- 2) *Aramandalam*: Bending knees partly downwards from the *Sama* posture of *Nilavu*.



Plate no. 4.9

3) *Mukkal Mandalam*: Three in Fourth bending of the knees down.



Plate no. 4.10

4) *Muzhu Mandalam*: Full sit position on the toes with knees turned out.



Plate no. 4.11

Kaal Sadhakam: Tapping of the feet in the position of *Aramandalam* is known as *Kaa lSadhakam* in Kalyanikuttiyamma School of *Mohiniyattam*.¹⁸³ This particular pattern of exercise is designed to acquire the rhythmic sense or the automatised installation of the rhythmic skill into the body of the performer.

Chuzhipu (circular movement of the upper body), *Madakku* (folding of the hands at different measurements) *Vrutham* (spacial measurements designated to regulate the geographical area of the movement to both hands and legs) and so on are the **other bodily exercise patterns**.

Character of the bodily movement or *Lasya* of *Mohiniyattam* is defined by Kalyanikuttiyamma as follows:

“Ilamkaatilulanjeedum

Pinchunelchedipolave

Mruduvaayivaranamdeha

Chalanamnarthakikkaye.” (Kalyanikuttiyamma,1992)

“The ears of paddy sway in the mildest touch of the breeze, so as the dancing body of Mohiniyattam.” (Translated by the researcher)

This verse is a frequently rendered idea of *Mohiniyattam* which is presented in many schools of *Mohiniyattam*. Understanding the crux of this verse enables one to control the gigantic waves (inappropriate or over-expressed swaying of torso) in the initial days of acquiring the craft. This verse is thus replicated in the class rooms of primary level quite often.

¹⁸³In Kalamandalam School, this exercise is practiced as the first Adavu of the vocabulary.

Her classifications of the movement patterns are as seen in the *LakshanaGrandhas* of Indian classical dance, starting from the major limbs to the minor limbs. Her fascination for poetry made her successful in developing the theoretical frames of practicum in the shells of verses. This had a crucial role in the development of *Mohiniyattam* as it helped *Mohiniyattam* to develop the urban pedagogic structure. Influence of her spouse Kalamandalam Krishnan Nair was so tremendous that it had been reflected in the total development of her pedagogy. Because of his unwavering support and presence in her life, she could develop various aspects of *Mohiniyattam* such as the *Netrabhinaya* (expressions of the eyes), *Angikabhinaya* (expressions conveyed through the movements of body limbs) and so on. The *adavus* (small movement units) developed by her bore the imprints of the native traditions of *Kathakali* and *Kalaripayattu*.

Adavus: *Adavus* are 57 in number in the School of *Kalyanikuttyamma*. They are clustered into *Taganam*, *Jaganam*, *Dhaganam*, *Sammisram* and so on. Each of these clusters constitutes minor units of movements further. Minor units of *Taganam Adavu* are *Alolitam*, *nimnonnatha*, *Bhramari*, *Thithithai* and so on. *Damba*, *Alolitha*, *Bhramari*, *Nimnonnitha*, *Thithithai* are the units that come under the cluster of *Jaganam*. Under *Dhaganam* and *Sammisram*, there are only two units- *Alolitha* and *Nimnonnitha* respectively.

Tirmana Adavus: *Tirmana Adavus* constitute the final cluster of *Mohiniyattam adavus* taught in *Kalyanikuttyamma School of Mohiniyattam*. They are codified in accordance with the syllables rendered; “*Thlangu Dhinnathom*”, “*Thadim ginathom*” and many more.

Alolitham: *Adavus* done with more elaboration on the swaying movement (*Ulachil*) is known as *Alolitham*.

Nimnonnatha: The constant variations of wavy movement of the body in the frame of *sama* and *muzhumandala Nilavus* are known as *Nimnonnatham*.

Dambha: Energetic movements of the body which resembles the *Veera rasa*.

Bhramari: Self circling of the body in between the movements.

Thithithai: A character of *Tirmana Adavus*.

PaadaGati (*Gait of feet movements*): *Paadagatis* are the movements drawn from nature's own movements. It imitates the movements of living creatures like Swan, Peacock, Cuckoo, Frog and Snake respectively. That are namely *Hamsa Paadam*, *Mayura Paadam*, *Kukkuda Paadam*, *Manduka Paadam*, *Naga Bhandha* and many more (Kala Vijayan,2012).

Karanas (*movement patterns*): There are Fifteen *Karanas* developed by Kalamandalam Kalyani Kuttiyamma and adapted them into the practice of *Mohiniyattam*. (Kala Vijayan,2012).¹⁸⁴

- 1) *Antolitha*: The name of this *Karana* has been coined in accordance with flowing nature of the movement and it comes under the 'Nilavu' of *Alolita* of *Taganam* group.
- 2) *Mrugangi*: As the name indicates, the nature of this movement resemblances the jump of the deer. This movement is also an adaptation of an *Adavu* of *Taganam* group.
- 3) *Adharva*: The sides of the torso being brought towards the down makes this movement known as *Adharva*.
- 4) *Praphulla*: The feet, the hands and the body are being brought into the straight and steady position.
- 5) *Chamkramika*: The waist, the feet and the hands rotate in round.
- 6) *Shalabha*: This movement resembles the movement of a butterfly.
- 7) *Urdhvamughi*: The upper body and hands being brought down and raised upward.
- 8) *Khatangi*: The upper and the lower parts of the body separately looking like the shape of the pot made this movement known as *Khatangi*.
- 9) *Lolitha*: A swaying movement that resemblances the motion of the beetle.
- 10) *Mrugekshana*: This movement is the way the deer jumps and runs away gliding its neck frequently.
- 11) *Vilamaba*: The slowest movement of the entire body from the downward to the upward.
- 12) *Dambha*: A position expressing more vigour and pride.
- 13) *Bhramana*: Self circling of the body with hands stretched.

¹⁸⁴ Different *Karanas* developed in the school of Kalyanikuttyamma is given here. *Karanas* are being introduced initially to the performative realm of *Mohiniyattam* by this school.

- 14) *Suvikshan*: A straight position of the body expressing subtle smile and pride on the face (Kala Vijayan,2012).

The *adavus* and exercises of this school explore the movement possibilities of *Mohiniyattam* to a great extent. At the same time, one could also see many strict rules attached to this school. The school tried to impose new values and norms to the existing form and thorough lineage, these rules turned out to be the values of this tradition. The present reputation of this school is not only the result of the potential of the proprietor of the school, but also the hard work and creativity of its followers. Her daughter Sreedevi Rajan has made a tremendous extension of this tradition through her research and practice. She enhanced the *Hashtabhinaya* by incorporating the ideas of tantric usage of hand gestures. And her hard work as a teacher and trainer of this form accelerated the number of followers to the Kalyanikuttiyamma School of *Mohiniyattam*. The Kalyanikuttiyamma model evolved in *Mohiniyattam* through the continuous and proper practice of the strategies such as imitation, repetition and reproduction.¹⁸⁵

It is one of the special qualities of Kalyanikuttiyamma, that she was also a person greatly smitten by the muses. Besides her profession as a dance practitioner, she was also a poet who wrote in *Malayalam*. It could be her interest and aptitude in literature that made her document and save the practical experimentations of *Mohiniyattam* that she had undertaken, for the betterment of the future generation aspirants of the art form.¹⁸⁶

The Revolutions on *Aharya*

Like other technicalities of *Mohiniyattam*, *Kalyanikuttiyamma* School also maintained strict rules for the *Aharya* of *Mohiniyattam*. The costume, attire and hairdo they follow at present is a result of the intensive research undertaken by Kalyanikuttiyamma. Since they believed patterns as the clear representation of the ethnicity of *Mohiniyattam*, they were not convinced with experimenting new models

¹⁸⁵ Imitation is the first and crucial stage of learning the dance form. By imitation the learner grasps the actions of Guru directly from the face of her. 'Guru-mugham', this word implies the phenomenon of imitation in the traditional vocal codes of Mohiniyattam. After learning or copying a particular movement, the learner repeats it many times. And once she/ he believes the accuracy and finesse of their movement patterns, they move on to reproduce it through their visions of creativity.

¹⁸⁶ Kalamandalam Kalyanikuttiyamma was gifted with the title 'Kaviyathri' (Poetess) by Vallathol in 1940 after listening to his 'Mangala Patram' during the ceremony of his 'Shashtipoorthi' (80th birthday) which was written by her (SreedeviRajan& Smitha Rajan, Sahapedia Interview, Feb 15,2015).

on it. Kalyanikuttyamma designed the hairdo of *Mohiniyattam* after referring to *Natyasastra*. She states that in the region of Kerala the treatise had suggested *Gaudareeti*. Based on this concept, she developed two different hair styles- *Nagalambham* and *Kakapaksham* (Dhananjayan, 1993:54). Smitha Rajan explains the nuances of their hairdo in a nutshell format in an interview she gave to Anu Chellappa, at St. Louis as given below.

“My grandmother protested against this new style at *Kalamandalam* strongly because of three reasons. The first one being: When she was a student at *Kalamandalam*, dancer Shanta Rao (*Bharatanatyam* dancer), who went there to take some classes in *Mohiniyattam*, brought out this same idea of tying the hair on the side like the ladies in Raja Ravi Varma's paintings. Both Vallathol and her Guru (Appekattu Krishna PanickerAsan) completely denied this and made her understand that this hairstyle is tied by the women in Thiruvithamkur palace and not by the common women in Kerala. And *Mohiniyattam* is a *shastriyanritam* and it has its strict rules to be always followed by its practitioners like the other classical dance forms of India. The second reason: *Nritta* or dance is a kind of *yoga* and in *yoga Pingala*, *Ida*, and the *Sushumna* nerves of the human body has significance in achieving *Moksha*, the ultimate peace. To represent these nerves a dancer plaits her hair by parting it into three, like three serpents crawling on each other (like the nerves itself), which start from the *Mooladhara*, bottom part of the spinal cord, and reach the *Sahasrarapadma* and then when it reaches the *Bhrumadhyarekha* (between the eyebrows) one attains tranquility. To represent the *Sahasrarapadma* we tie a bun on the back of our head and decorate it with flowers and to represent the *Pingala* and *Ida* nerves we wear the *Suryakkala* and the *Chandrakkala* on either side of the head. And the third is the symmetry: a dancer has to have this - which is very necessary and which you can see in most of the other classical dance forms of India” (Smitha Rajan, interviewed by Anu Chellappa, 2004).

Her notable disciples include SreedeviRajan, Kala Vijayan, Girija Kurup, Chandrika Kurup, Smitha Rajan, Gopika Varma, Deepthi Omcheri Bhalla and many others. (Refer to the next part of this chapter, the offshoots for more information in this regard) It is definitely because of her contributions on the revitalisation of the performativity of the art form, today artistes of *Mohiniyattam* are able to follow such a model of creativity to propagate and perpetuate the performing space of the form. Interestingly, the last wish of Mahakavi Vallathol that he had shared directly with Kalyanikuttyamma was that: “I have been able to give *Kathakali* the place it deserves. But in regard to *Mohiniyattam*, though I have reformed it, I have not been able to give it its due place. You are the only one who can do something for it” (Venkitaraman, 1989:17). This statement itself could be a great honour to Kalamandalam Kalyanikuttyamma and highlights her importance in the field of *Mohiniyattam*. She had also acted in commercial movies such as *Rarichan Enna*

Pauran in 1956, *Asuravithu* in 1968, *Gandharva Kshetram* in 1972 and *Randu Mukhangal* in 1981. This could be a reflection of the social acceptance and recognition she had gained as an artiste in the society.

Contributions of Kalamandalam Sathyabhama to the Growth and Development of Mohiniyattam Pedagogy

Kalamandalam Sathyabhama joined her Alma mater as a dance instructor in 1957 after the completion of five years' dance course offered at *Kalamandalam*. Initially she assisted her Guru Chinnammuamma in teaching preliminaries of *Mohiniyattam* and she took the main in-charge of the faculty in 1964 after the retirement of Thottasserry Chinnammuamma. She was the one who initiated the drift of change in the revival of dance pedagogy for the first time in *Mohiniyattam* history. This movement was provoked by the blank-space of preliminary lessons in the *Mohiniyattam Kalari (Practice room)*. According to her and her disciples's words, she sorted some *Adavus* (small units of movement pattern) from the repertoire of the remains of the art form and choreographed new ones which resonated with them (Sathyabhama & Lathika, 2014; Kalamandalam Sugandhi, Interview, Kalamassery, 25, Oct 2015; Kalamandalam Chandrika, Interview, Edappalli, 29, March 2016). With the collaborative effort of a *Kathakali* maestro and her spouse Kalamandalam Padmanabhan Nair, she could correspond the hand gestural language from the treatise *Hashta Lakshana Deepika* into *Mohiniyattam* and enrich the *Hashtabhinaya*. This was made possible by adapting some elaborated gestures of *Kathakali* into the choreographic works of *Mohiniyattam*. Kalamandalam Sathyabhama has mentioned in her book that most of the times the choreographic texts for *Mohiniyattam* were suggested by Killimangalam Vasudevan Nambudirippadu¹⁸⁷, Kalamandalam Padmanabhan Nair, and the Music Faculty Sukumari teacher (Sathyabhama & Lathika, 2014). She started by refreshing the already taught items of *Kalamandalam*, seeking the help from literary scholars to reconstruct the wrongly executed histrionics of *Sahithya* (lyrics of the dance compositions) of the *Mohiniyattam* numbers.

Her choreographic endeavour began with the '*Padam*' composed by Maharaja Swathi Thirunal, '*Panimati Mukhi Baale*'. Sukumari teacher assisted her in the vocal

¹⁸⁷The then Superintendent of Kalamandalam

and meanwhile Unnikrishnan Ilayath¹⁸⁸ helped her to interpret the *Sahithya* of the composition. The role of Padmanabhan Nair to mentor her for the over-all choreographic essence of the same right from the hand-gestures to the facial-expressions per se. The rendition of the *Telugu Varna* 'Swami Ninne Nammithira' taught by Guru Chinnammu Amma was partially wrong from its second half. Execution of this wrong pattern continued in the *Kalari* till Kalamandalam Kalyanikuttiyamma informed the same to Killimangalam Vasudevan Nambudirippadu.¹⁸⁹ As Kalamandalam Kalyanikuttiyamma belonged to the second Batch students of *Kerala Kalamandalam*, she was fortunate to learn under the tutelage of Krishna Paniker¹⁹⁰ and Madhaviyamma (see flow chart No.1). In 1966, Kalamandalam Sathyabhama was sent to Kalyanikuttiyamma to learn a few items of *Mohiniyattam* which Kalyanikuttiyamma had learnt from the first-generation masters of *Kalamandalam*. This episode of learning instigated *Kalamandalam* repertoire to undergo further improvisations. The *padam* 'Enthaho Vallabha' taught by Chinnammu Amma was also revived, aspiring the essence of Kalyanikuttiyamma's version of the same. The invocatory and the iconic number of *Mohiniyattam* 'Chollukettu' also changed drastically. In her own words, the most complicated choreography she had ever done was her very first attempt on the *Varna* 'Dani Samajendra Gamini' (Kalamandalam Sathyabhama, AIR Interview, 20, April, 2014). The text of choreography for this particular number was chosen and given to her by the Superintendent Killimangalam Vasudevan Nambudirippadu. She created a few new *Adavus* that were free from the influence of neighbouring disciplines such as *Bharathanatyam* and *Kathakali* before initiating the choreographic work of *Dani Samajendra* (Sathyabhama & Lathika, 2014). This item is still notable among the other numbers for the *Vinyasa* (elaboration) on the *Kama Bhana* (Arrow of the cupid) which is portrayed in it. She introduced a *Nayika* into the scenario of *Mohiniyattam* out of the mundane practices of barging onto the stereotyped ones. From this point, this school of *Mohiniyattam Pedagogy* has been known under the title of *Kalamandalam*.

¹⁸⁸ He was the faculty of Literature during 1950's in *Kalamandalam*.

¹⁸⁹ During that time Kalamandalam Kalyanikuttiyamma was working at *DarpanaAcademy*, Ahmadabad.

¹⁹⁰ Renowned performer Shanta Rao was the last student he taught. (Janah& Chatterji,1979).

Choreographic endeavours of Kalamandalam Sathyabhama;

<i>Varnas</i>		<i>Raga</i>
1	<i>Daani Samajendra Gamini</i>	<i>Thoti</i>
2	<i>Manasime Parithapam</i>	<i>Sankarabharanam</i>
3	<i>Sumasayaka</i>	<i>Kappi</i>
4	<i>Ha Vanchithaham</i>	<i>Dhanyasi</i>
5	<i>Pannagendra Shayana (Kirthanam)</i>	<i>Ragamalika</i>
<i>Padams</i>		<i>Raga</i>
1	<i>Panimati Mukhi Baale</i>	<i>Aahiri</i>
2	<i>Tharuni Njan Enthu Cheyvu</i>	<i>Dwijavandi</i>
3	<i>KanthanoduChennumelle</i>	<i>Neelambhari</i>
4	<i>Viditham the Nishavrutham</i>	<i>Suruti</i>
5	<i>Karuna Cheyvanenthu</i>	<i>Ragamalika</i>
6	<i>Kantha Thava PizhaNjan</i>	<i>Atana</i>
7	<i>Ilathalir Shayane</i>	<i>Punnagavarali</i>
8	<i>Kanakamayamayidum</i>	<i>Hussaini</i>
9	<i>Sundara Srunu kantha</i>	<i>Arabhi</i>
10	<i>Panchabanan Thannudaya</i>	<i>Kamboji</i>
11	<i>Aryaputra Kshamichalum</i>	<i>Ragamalika</i>

Table 4.1 From *Mohiniyattam: History, theory and practice* authored by Kalamandalam Sathyabhama in 2014.

Kalamandalam Mohiniyattam Pedagogy: Practical Lessons under the Tutelage of Kalamandalam Sathyabhama

Preliminary exercises of **Morning Sadaka** session includes:

- 1) Waving of the hands to the sides (*Veeshal*).
- 2) Front and back bending of torso (*Valachil*).

- 3) Front and back deflecting movement of the shoulder (*TholIlakkal*).
- 4) Different types of jumps (*Chattam*).
- 5) Stretching of arms and legs (*Valichil*).
- 6) Circular and waving movements of the torso (*Ulachil*).
- 7) Circular movements of the wrist and the palms (*ManibandhamUruttal*).
- 8) Vibrating movements of the hand-fingers, cheeks, high brows and so on (*Ilakkal*).
- 9) Various body bending positions like bending over backward, arch, bridge and so on (*Valachil*).
- 10) Practice of *Stances* and *Postures*.

Vandikkal /Kumpidal/ Namaskara Vidhi

It is a ritual performed in the beginning of *Mohiniyattam* practicum to pay obeisance to Gods, Guru, Earth and Audience. Starting from the posture *Aramandala*¹⁹¹, each foot one after the other takes to the front and gradually comes to the posture of *Muzhu mandala*¹⁹². Then the hands move through a circular pattern to bring it to the front of the chest as *Anjali Hastha* and touch the mother earth to seek her permission and blessings ahead. This sequence ends in *Samapada*.

***Mohiniyattam Nilakal* (Stances)**

- 1) *Samam*: Feet are joined together. Left-hand palm is folded and posited on the left waist. While the right folded palm is to be posited in front of the left-folded-palm, chest has to be raised.
- 2) *Mandalam*: Feet, one and half feet apart, upright position, hand position as described above.
- 3) *Ara Mandalam*: Feet, one and half feet apart, turned towards the corners. Knees bent towards the corners. Hands positioned in the ‘*Vaishnava stana*’ (four *angula* (finger) ¹⁹³ distanced position of the hands from the chest.) *Hamsa-paksha* mudras downturned, finger tips to face the respective corners. Mutual distance between the palms is of one finger measurements.

¹⁹¹ *Aramandala* of *Mohiniyattam* has two feet distance between the feet.

¹⁹² Full sit position in *kunchitapaada* of *Natya Sastra*.

¹⁹³ Measurement (one *angulam* is approximately 3 centimeters).

- 4) *Muzhu Mandalam*: Sit on the fore part of the feet from the position of *Ara Mandalam*.

Pada Bhedas (Feet positions)

- 1) *Samam*: Feet together and stand straight.
- 2) *Mandalam*: The feet out-turned position.
- 3) *Kunchitham*: Stands on the forepart of the feet in *Aramandalam*, heels raised.
- 4) *Anjitham*: Forepart of the feet is raised and stood on the heels in *Samam*.
- 5) *Thaatitham*: Legs crossed with the right foot as *Kunchitha* posited before the left foot.
- 6) *Nagabhandham*: Legs crossed with the sole part of the feet touched on the ground.
- 7) *Vatimbu*: Stand on the edges of the feet in *Aramandalam*.
- 8) *Shaada Gati*: Right foot is posited nearby the left as *Kunchitha* in *Aramandalam* position.
- 9) *Nritha Moorthi*: The opposite execution of *Shaadagati*.
- 10) *Garuda Nila*: *Muzhumandala* with one knee touching the ground.

Adavus or Single Unit movements:

The *Adavus* that have been practised at *Kalamandalam* today and systematized by *Kalamandalam Sathyabhama* are thirty in number followed by six *Pirivu Adavus* and seven *Charis*. *Adavus* comprise every details of the technique of *Mohiniyattam*. *Adavus* are the outcome of the movements and postures such as *Amarnnu cavittal*, *Ulachil*, *Chari*¹⁹⁴, and Stances like *Sama*, *Aramandala*, *Muzhumandala*. *Pirivu Adavus* or *Tirmana Adavus* are the concluding units of the movement constructs that syllables *dhithithai*. *Charis* are the predominant part of *Mohiniyattam* as it bridges various compartments of the body movement. It is a conjoined act of movements by waist, thighs and lower-legs. This sequence appears especially as the inter-loop between *Pallavi*, *Anupallavi* and *Charana* of the composition.

¹⁹⁴ See the glossary

Mohiniyattam Technique: Kalamandalam School

Mohiniyattam belongs to the *Lasya* tradition of *Nritta* as described by *Natya Sastra*. Scholars and practitioners often refer *Kaisiki Vritti* of *Natya Sastra* to *Mohiniyattam*. “Among the *rasas*, *Sringara*, *Karuna* and *Bhakti* befit *Mohiniyattam* while, *rasas* like *Veera* and *Roudra* would not go with *Mohiniyattam*.”- this is the most-heard and hackneyed phrase of *Mohiniyattam*.¹⁹⁵ However, the ethos of *Mohiniyattam* pedagogy took birth from these stem-ideas.¹⁹⁶ “Undoubtedly the circular and the wavy movements give character to *Mohiniyattam* but an exaggerated execution of them could also kill the soul of the art form. Fast and jerky movements are also un-fit for *Mohiniyattam*” (Sathyabhama & Lathika, 2014). Most of the choreographies of Kalamandalam Sathyabhama centres on the themes like Separation of the couple, *Kama-bhana* and its effects and so on. A bit of the theme (is part of the syllabus of *Kalamandalam*) has been enfolded here:

***“Aravindamashokashcha
Choothanjanavamaalika
Neelolpalashchapanchai the
Panchabanasya Sayaka”***

The five *Bhanas* (arrows) of *Kamadeva* (the cupid) are the flowers, *Aravindam* (Lotus flower), *Asokam* (flower of *Saraca Indica*), *Chootham* (flower of the mango tree), *Navamalika* (a kind of Jasmine flower), *Neelolpalam* (*Crataeva Religiosa*/ Blue lotus) and so on.

***“Unmaadanasthaapanashcha
Shoshanasthambhanasthatha
SammohanashchaKamasya
PanchaBaanaPrakeerthitha.”***

Bhana of the lotus flower intoxicates while *Asoka* produces the heat in the body and the flower of mango tree makes the body of the sufferer thin, the jasmine makes her static and the blue lotus makes the sufferer faint.

The above-mentioned concept in her choreography is describes as follows:

¹⁹⁵ However, it is being redefined slowly.

¹⁹⁶ This aspect is discussed in the first section of the final chapter.

The *Varna 'Manasime Parithapam'* elaborates the coming of cupid to the heroine in the season of spring and he throws flowery-arrows towards her. The bow of cupid has been made of sugar cane, while the thread tied into the bow is a swarm of bees. It also describes the state of mind of Cupid after he sees the plight of the heroine who suffers from the severe pain of the magical arrows. This theme had become iconic of *Mohiniyattam* repertoire.¹⁹⁷

In the histrionic executions of *Mohiniyattam* solo, the dancer herself takes up the role of the protagonist. According to Sathyabhama teacher, the *Nayaka* has to be placed on the right side of the stage and she has to present her companion (*Sakhi*) on the left. She used to place greater stress on this idea throughout her teaching. Even the researcher got an opportunity to listen to this idea in person during the teaching session at *Kalamandalam*.

Experimentation on the *Aharya* of *Mohiniyattam*

White *Sari* with black or red upper piece was the attire of *Mohiniyattam* in the early 1950s (Killimangalam, Interview, Mulamkunnathukavu, 25, March, 2014; Sathyabhama, 2014; Kalamandalam Chandrika, Interview, Idappalli, 29, March, 2016). Eventually it turned out to be a full-off-white costume. Previously the *Sari* used to be draped manually with pleats whereas today the costume has changed to that of a stitched one. The attire is as simple as the regional clothing culture '*Veshti and Mundu*' of Kerala.¹⁹⁸ Hairdo that we popularly see today had been fashioned by Kalamandalam Sathyabhama in 1968. It is done by tying the entire hair rolled and folded over the left side of the head and the bun then encircled with jasmine flowers. *Kashu Mala / Lakshmi Mala, Nagapadam, Palaykka* and so on are the specific neck ornaments worn in *Mohiniyattam*. Rest of the ornamentations are the same *temple-ornaments* which are used in *Bharathanatyam* and *Kuchipudi*. Sathyabhama teacher adapted the cultural metaphors of the then society into the visual expressions of *Mohiniyattam*. The hairdo and the colour of upper cloth have been brought into the milieu of *Mohiniyattam* in this way. For instance, she had experimented with black and blue colours for the upper clothing (blouse). This was a mere reflection of the then society where the black and blue combinations of blouses were more popular

¹⁹⁷ Field notes, Participant observation of the researcher.

¹⁹⁸ Not indigenous but widely accepted attire to show politeness of the so called 'elite'.

among the women (Census of India, 1961:399). The hairdo had been taken from the popular painting of Raja Ravi Varma. But this hairdo has however resemblance with the adapted hairdo of Malayali people of yester times.¹⁹⁹ Kalamandalam Sathyabhama had abridged her works and endeavours including the memoirs of her student and teacher-life of *Kalamandalam* in the book “*Mohiniyattam; History, theory and practice*” which is co-authored by her daughter Kalamandalam Lathika.²⁰⁰

Her notable disciples include Kalamandalam Sumathi, Kalamandalam Kshemavathi, Kalamandalam Saraswati, Kalamandalam Leelamma, Kalamandalam Hymavathy, Kalamandalam Lathika, Kalamandalam Lathika P S, Kalamandalam Bhageeshwari, Kalamandalam Rajalakshmi, Kalamandalam Pushpalatha, Bharathi Shivaji, Mandakini Trivedi and many others. (Refer to the next part of the chapter, the offshoots for more information in this regard)

The students of *Kalamandalam* follow her legacy and performative concepts. Through rigorous practice, they create uniformity in the performance productions of their institute. This sort of discipline has been brought by Sathyabhama teacher in the institute. Thus, her contribution towards the pedagogic realm of *Mohiniyattam* is also praiseworthy.

The performativity and pedagogy of *Mohiniyattam* was further developed through the incomparable patronage and wisdom shared by the veteran theatre scholar and practitioner, Kavalam Narayana Panikkar. It was in 1970s he entered into the terrain of *Mohiniyattam*-practice. He became a pillar of support for those who sought learning *Mohiniyattam* from outside the state. Presently, there are many dancers who follow his legacy by producing and reproducing his conceptual frames of *Sopana* tradition (*Sopana Sangitham*) on stage. The schools that were thoroughly conceptualised, contextualised and materialised were of Kanak Rele and Bharathi Shivaji. Even though most of the native scholars and dancers do not acknowledge them as major pedagogic frames or Schools of *Mohiniyattam*, their contribution towards the development of this art form cannot be denied. One needs to have an idea

¹⁹⁹It was not only popular among the people of Travancore. The statement given in the interview of Smitha Rajan could be wrong. (Anu Chellappa’s interview with Smitha Rajan) (See the appendix for more details in this regard.)

²⁰⁰Sathyabhama, Kalamandalam. Mohandas, Lathika. (2014). *Mohiniyattam: Caritram, Sidhantam, Prayogam*. (Malayalam). Kozhikode: Mathrubhumi Books. p. 98.

about Kavalam Narayana Panikkar and his art guild before reviewing these non-native, strong constructs of *Mohiniyattam* dance.

Kavalam Narayana Panikkar

Kavalam Narayana Panicker had been a major source of inspiration and creative-visionary for the dancers of *Mohiniyattam* from Kanak Rele to Methil Devika. His reverberating attempts and contributions in the field of performing art could be perceived as a model which has been traced by many dancers since the 1970s. However, today it has also become a stereotyped practice of *Mohiniyattam* choreographies. Dancers often address it as a school of practice in *Mohiniyattam*. The major characteristic feature of the style ‘*Sopanam*’ which he had propagated was of the indigenous musical ethos. He had been merging it with the traditions of other performing arts. He employed the folk concepts of performativity in the contemporary space of theatre performance. This invention in the realm of theatre space is called as ‘*Thanath*’ (organic) after his name. He approached *Mohiniyattam* in the similar manner. He made dancers of *Mohiniyattam* get attached with the culture of the sacred groves and the ritualistic performances of the land. He had incorporated the regional *Thalas* to the choreographic frames of the dance. His model of creativity grants one freedom in the performance approaches of any traditional cult of dancing. However, an existing concern raised by this model of *Mohiniyattam* performance is- how far did the Dravidian concepts used by this school of thought help the form to become liberal and free from the mundane exercise of the elite-fantasies? The contributions of Kavalam Narayana Panikkar could be marked as a mile stone in the development of *Mohiniyattam* as it stimulated many creative and brilliant feats of magic born into the terrain of *Mohiniyattam*-performativity.

New Meadows of *Mohiniyattam*: Kanak Rele’s Contributions to the Art Form

Being a non-malayali, Kanak Rele had to crossover many challenges and puzzles to enter the field of *Mohiniyattam*. She says that those hurdles made her understand the art form in depth and clear manner (Kanak Rele, Mumbai Local: Interview, March, 2017). Apart from learning *Mohiniyattam* she had to also look into the history and the culture that surrounded the birth of the art form. She had otherwise no roots in *Malayalam* to proceed her inquisitiveness about the art form. She started learning the initial lessons of *Mohiniyattam* from Bombay under

Kalamandalam Rajalakshmi and was quite a bit habituated with the form as she was already a performer of *Kathakali* then. It was when she got the opportunity to conduct a project fully funded by the FORD foundation in 1970-71, she chose *Mohiniyattam* as the topic of the study and that was how she came in connection with *Mohiniyattam* in such an intimate manner.

Lacunae of the vocabulary of *Mohiniyattam* disappointed her initially.²⁰¹ Gradually, she created an urge in herself to find the essence of its movement-language and eventually it allowed her to delve into an in-depth research study of the art form. The study has been conducted in the light of the archaeological records of ancient Kerala and she analysed and formulated the movements of *Mohiniyattam* with the help of ancient sculptures of the dancing women engraved on the walls of various ancient temples of Kerala. The research aptitude in her widened her horizons and took her to new meadows in the development of the art form. She was the one who initiated a scientific system regarding the dance movement notation into the arena of *Mohiniyattam* pedagogy. She brought the usages of *Lakshana Grandhas* widely to the practice of *Mohiniyattam*. For systematizing the movement patterns, she used the ancient treatises like *Natya Sastra*, *Abhinaya Darpana* and *Balaramabharatha* respectively. She adapted the techniques and terms from these treatises to the performance text of *Mohiniyattam*. The book she authored in 1992 “*Mohiniyattam, the lyrical Dance*” explains the technique and content of *Mohiniyattam* in detail, specifically in the 7th chapter of the same (Rele, 1992).

The Concept of *Mohiniyattam* Technique Envisioned by Kanak Rele

The cultural and philosophical explanations she provides about the dances of Kerala are noteworthy as it throws light on the native mystic traditions related to it. She quotes Mr. Sach (Author of World History of the Dance) when she brings the concept of ‘image dance and imageless dance’ into the context of *Mohiniyattam* of

²⁰¹ Kanak rele had expressed about the pathetic state of *Mohiniyattam* that she could find during her initial years of research (during 1970’s) on the art form in many platforms. However, by the time in Kerala there were two schools were already established in *Mohiniyattam*; Kalamandalam and Kalyanikuttiyyamma. Kalyanikuttiyyamma responded to these claims put forth by the dancers Shanta rao and Kanak Rele as: “this kind of claim that *Mohiniyattam* was becoming extinct and might have perished but for this or that dancer’s dedication- raised Kalyanikuttiyyamma’s hackles. She said “we, the old dancers do not have the academic qualifications and we have problems of communicating in English. Maybe we were not able to bring this art form to the rest of the world for lacks of contacts and support. But this did not mean *Mohiniyattam* was dead in Kerala (and had to be rescued by these outsiders” (Surendran& Unnikrishnan, 1989: 18).

Kerala. She defines *Mohiniyattam* as image dance where “the image dance is described as extravert. The extravert dancer has faith in his/ her senses and sensual perception and has the power to cause the metaphysical to become physical. And Imageless dance as introvert and is free of the body because it is designed so as to lift the body out of its corporeality of the force of its movements” (Rele,1992:120). She also gives a meticulous account of the history of the art form through the changes altered in the cult of worship and clans of the society.

Kanak Rele conceptualises the spiral movement patterns of *Mohiniyattam* in a philosophical fashion. The spiral movement of the torso is one of the predominant movements in the technique-dictionary of *Mohiniyattam*. Spiral movements are centralised on one point (the *bindu*) which is the naval part of the human body and it goes and comes back to the particular point and towards any direction. For the *bindu*, she gives a different school of thought as she correlates it to an embryo and the further movements emerged from the *Bindu* are the stages of development of the being (embryo) unto the maturity/ spirit.

Rele (1992) states that “This *Bindu* is analogous to the Embryo *brahmananda* (the Cosmic Egg). As the embryo grows from the navel, as the Supreme being created the many petalled world from his navel from where it spreads in every possible directions. On the same principle, time and the directions of space manifest from this central axis- Mount *Meru*. The body of the *Mohiniyattam* dancer coils and uncoils in honour of the *Kundalini*, the coiled female serpent energy.” (p.120).

She also investigates terminologies coined by the *Lakshana Grandhas* through the movement practices of *Mohiniyattam* and constructs the same according to the given phrases. She also notates the movement using some codified diagrams with accurate spacial measurements.

Repertoire and the Musical Pedagogy

Apart from the traditional numbers learnt from the gurus, Kunjukuttiyamma and Thottasserry Chinnammu Amma, Kanak Rele also choreographed new numbers into this dance genre. She revived the numbers of the repertoire applying the genre of *Ashtapadi* Music that is *Sopana Sangitha* of Kerala, as *Mohiniyattam* is also an art form influenced by the Vaishnavite cult. An ethnographic study she made in 1971 revealed that the first item in the repertoire was an invocatory called *Ganapati/ Devi*. Guru Kunjukuttiyamma had mentioned to her that all those items were performed in

Lakshmi Tala. Moreover, her association with Shri. Kavalam Narayana Panikkar made her explore more about the *Sopana* system of music and the *Lakshmi Tala*. Tapping out its possibilities together, they created fresh numbers in the repertoire, revived the old pieces upholding the cultural values and brought them to the forefront. She created more than 25 numbers in the genre of *Sopana* System in *Mohiniyattam*. The central idea she grasped for the revival of *Mohiniyattam* repertoire was the organic music and rhythmic system of the land.

Kanak Rele's choreographies can be distinguished from the mundane conceptions of the themes regarding the *Nayika's* separation and reunion with her beloved. Despite rendering the same conventional cores, she selected themes on woman empowerment, celebration of femininity and many more. *Kubja*, *Kalyani*, *Cilappathikaram*, *Swapna Vasavadatham* and so on are some of the well-received choreographies done by her.

Kanak Rele's efforts for bringing a new department for Dance discipline in the University of Bombay is regarded as a milestone in the history of the art form. She had been appointed as the dean of the department since the days of its inception. She established an Institute for Dance Research, named *Nalanda Dance Research Centre* in 1966. Soon after, the dance school *Nalanda Nrityakala Mahavidyalaya* was established in 1972. Her intellectual visions about the art form blossomed for the aspirants of the art through her literary works. Her book on *Mohiniyattam*, entitled as "*Mohiniyattam; the Lyrical dance*"²⁰² published by Nalanda Dance Research Centre is an asset to the researchers and students of dance.

Her notable disciples include Sunanda Nair, Prabha Poduwal, Maturi Patil, Anjali Thakkar and Gauri Kulkarni and so on.

Bharathi Shivaji: Defining *Lasya* in an Organic Way

Bharathi Shivaji is another non- *Malayali* who has become popular in the sphere of *Mohiniyattam*. Born in Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu, she had already learnt *Bharathanatyam* and *Odissi* under the tutelage of authentic gurus of the art forms and was already into the performing arenas of the same. It was in 1970s, for the first time *Mohiniyattam* appeared in her thought when she watched Indrani Rehman

²⁰²Rele, Kanak. (1992). *Mohiniyattam, The lyrical Dance*. Mumbai: Nalanda Dance Research Centre.

(Well-known dancer of that time) performing the art form, *Mohiniyattam* at a venue in Delhi. She says that being an *Odissi* dancer, she admired the *lasya*/ feminine aspects of the dance form and this peculiar facet of the art form prompted her to drive her thoughts into the genre of *Mohiniyattam*. She learnt the primary lessons of *Mohiniyattam* from an alumnus of *Kalamandalam*, Radha Marar who had been settled in Delhi. A few items including *Cholkettu*, *Jatishwaram* in *Chenjurutti raga* and a *Padam* were taught to her at that time. The quest for exploring the deeper realms of the form increased when she felt the need to fill the inadequacies of the vocabulary of this form. Thus, she confirmed the idea to go to Kerala and explore the roots of the art form. She visited and sought training under *Kalamandalam Sathyabhama* in 1974 and thereafter under *Kalamandalam Kalyanikuttyamma*, and learnt the nuances and intricacies of both the schools. However, she still felt the urge to fill the lacuna and delve into the areas unexplored in the performative and pedagogic realm of *Mohiniyattam*. This thought paved the way for opening up her research chapter on the art form and its take and existence.

She had to struggle much and battle alone to open the new avenues of the art form and she advised the young takers of dance that “If you want to create something new, no matter how good it be, no one could accept or support you right away from its beginning” (Bharathi Shivaji, Interview, Shoranur, 09, Jan, 2017). Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay was the one who supported her strongly on behalf of *Sangita Nataka Akademi* to undertake the project that centred on the revival of *Mohiniyattam* under the fellowship scheme of the academy. In order to turn her dream project into reality, she visited Sri. Kavalam Narayana Panikkar, a renowned theatre scholar of Kerala and discussed its details. Since this significant meeting, she had started getting the smell and soil of the art form in a more-so an organic setting. Under the efficient guidance of Kavalam Narayana Panikkar, she started reviving *Mohiniyattam*, inculcating the *Desi Thala* system and the temple tradition of singing into it. Like Kanak Rele, her map of study also centred on the archaeological remaining and records of the Dances of Kerala. Bharathi Shivaji weaved her repertoire out of the contents that so far thoroughly influenced *Mohiniyattam*. The kind of attempt she has been making right from the beginning was more of a constructive and revolutionary one and in her words, no one appreciated her as she was a non-*Malayali*. Her major objective and

emphasis were to bring more *Lasya* into this enchanting form of female dancing. She lays great emphasis on this point whenever she speaks about *Mohiniattam*.

“The flavour of Kerala lies hidden (*layichukidakkunnu*) in multiple facets of its culture and tradition such as the temple architecture, musical tradition, sculpture, dance dramas, and tala patterns. The organic flavour of Kerala is hidden in many aspects of its cultural heritage. It is upon a dancer’s sensibility what he or she wants to pick from various sources” (Bharathi Shivaji, interviewed by Supriya Rajan, July 12, 2010; Bharathi Shivaji, Interview, Shoranur, 09, Jan, 2017). She started her training institute named *Kala Ambalam* in 1984 in Delhi and later in the early 1990s she renamed it as *Centre for Mohiniyattam*. After getting into the form, she attempted at rejuvenating the preliminary *Adavus* and strengthening the teaching methodology according to the round model torso movement of the same. With the immense help of Kavalam Narayana Panikkar, she could inculcate new numbers into the performing repertoire of *Mohiniyattam* such as *Ganapathi*, *Mukhajaalam*, *Mohinipurappadu*, *Athira* and many more. Upbringing this new yet organic dance numbers was initially perceived by the world as a rebellious and revolutionary movement. She had appropriated the nuances of other art forms like *Odissi* into the performative realm of *Mohiniyattam*. She developed the performance number *Mukhajaalam* by extracting the concept of *Pallavi* from *Odissi*. The final number of her *Mohiniyattam* repertoire, ‘Jeeva’ which is also regarded as her brain child, is drawn from the idea of *Moksha* in *Odissi*. (Bharathi Shivaji, Interview, Shoranur, Jan, 2017). Her wide range of peculiar choreographic endeavours includes *Chandrotsava* (A *Cembu Kavyam* of 16th Century), *Unni Ganapathi*, *Deva Geeta* (combination of *Ashtapadi* songs) and so on. She has also incorporated *Chollus* of the traditional percussions of Kerala such as *Idaykka* and *Maddale*.

The adapted *Chollus* of *Idaykka* and *Maddale* in her repertoire is as follows:

Idaykka:

“Kitatakitakutein

Kitatakitikutein

Kitatakitakutikutein

Kitatakitakukutein kuku

Kitatakitakukutein kuku tein kuku

Kitatakiteinku

Thamthamteinku

Thatha kuku teintein kuku

Takutakuteintakutakutein, takutakutein”

Maddale:
Takkinakinna
Dhikinnakinna” (Venkitaraman, 1991:21).

Later this school attained natural growth with many followers around the globe. She developed each of these numbers through in-depth study and research on the cultural soil of Kerala as each one curtailed the ethnic themes of the land. She was the first dancer to work with Kavalam Narayana Panikkar. And certainly, this collaboration enabled *Mohiniyattam* to extend its possibilities and acceptability world-wide. Her premier contribution was not only limited to the incorporation of *Sopana Sangitam* into the art form, but also as an experienced musician, she always welcomed soothing music genres to work upon the art form. In this regard, she introduced rare *Desi* ragas like *Indaalam*, *Desakshi*, *Samantha*, *Puraneer*, *Malahari* and many more into the musical realm of *Mohiniyattam*. And she says the soothing melodious balletic work of Tchaikovsky, ‘*The swan lake*’ came to her mind because she could imagine the flow of *Lasya* rejoicing well with the music. She interprets the term *Mohiniyattam* not in the conventional notion of its mythological origin but in the basic concept of *Lasya*. Her perspectives and ideas about the ethnicity and the performativity of *Mohiniyattam* have been discussed in depth in the book “*Art of Mohiniyattam*”²⁰³ which is authored by her in 1986. Her notable disciples include her daughter, Vijayalakshmi, Sunanda Nair, Pallavi Krishnan and many more.

²⁰³Shivaji, Bharathi. Pasricha, Avinash. (1986). *Art of Mohiniyattam*. Delhi: Lancer India.

Disintegration-Models of Pedagogy Conceived and Conceptualised by the Major Schools of *Mohiniyattam*:

Pedagogic Model of the Native Institutions (*Kalyanikuttiyamma* and *Kalamandalam*):

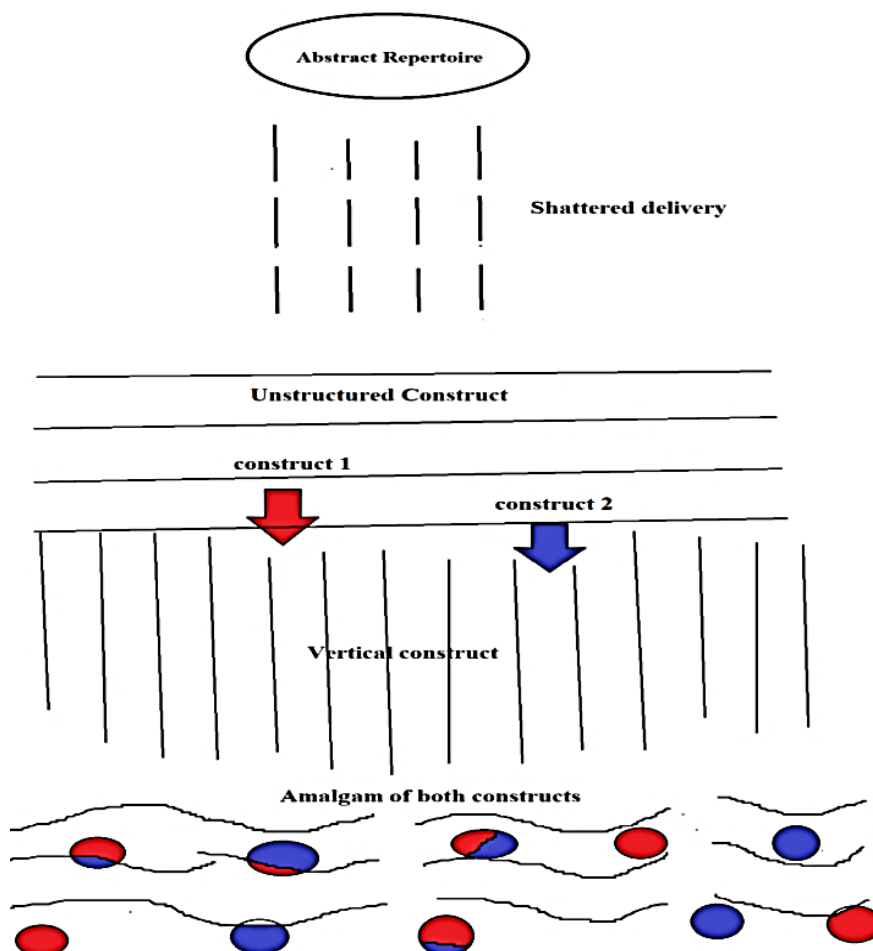


Plate no. 4.12

[Diagram note: The oval shape on the top of the diagram indicates the commencement of the institutional dance pedagogy. The broken vertical lines show the unstructured mode of delivering the lessons. Below that, the horizontal line is drawn to mark the initial shaping of *Mohiniyattam* pedagogic construct. Construct 'a' (in red colour, that is *Kalyanikuttiyamma* School) is the first institutionalized *Mohiniyattam* pedagogic construct and 'b' (in blue colour, *Kalamandalam* School) symbolises the second construct. The unbroken vertical lines that is drawn under that shows the certain, structured mode of delivering the lessons. The balls with amalgam of both the colours indicate further individual constructs of the pedagogy.]

Combinational Model

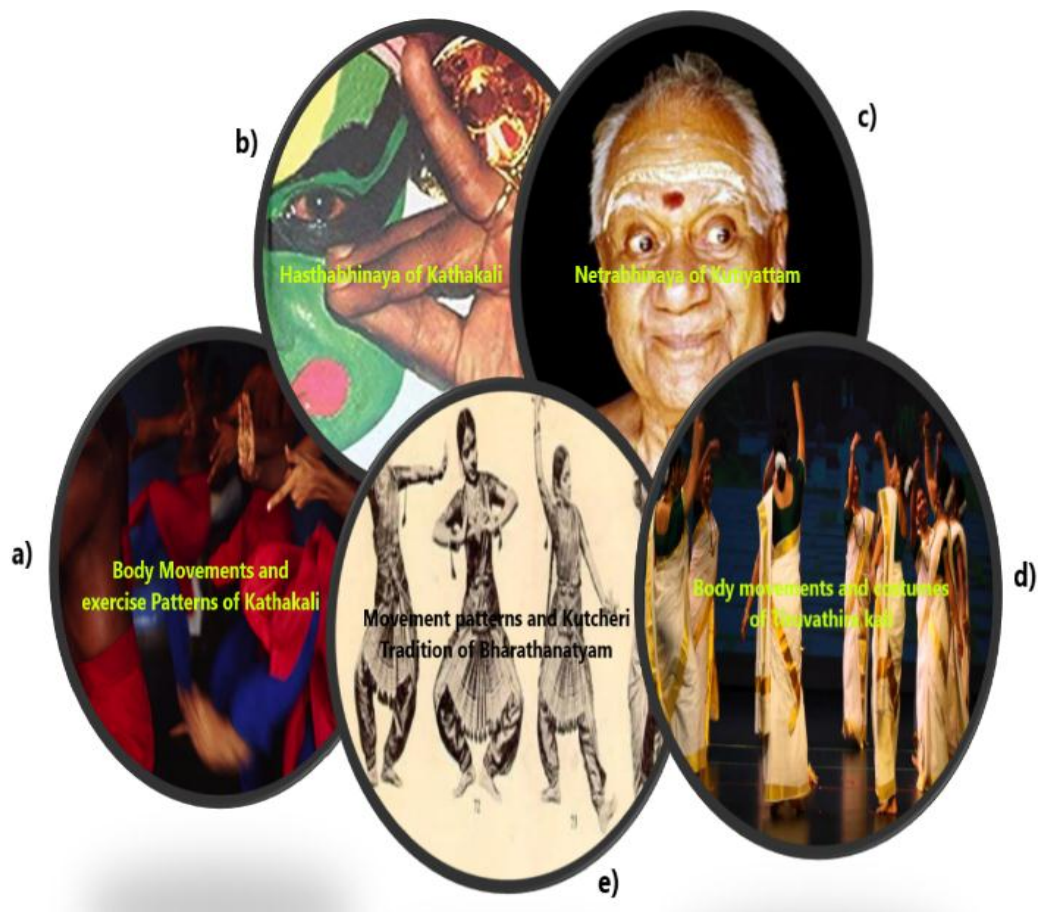


Plate no. 4.13

[Diagram note: This is a pictorial diagram which is drawn to emphasise the influences of other art forms on the development of *Mohiniyattam* pedagogy and practice. It is also to state the combinational model of development of the pedagogy and practice of *Mohiniyattam*. Picture 'a' is 'Body movements and exercise patterns of *Kathakali*', 'b' is *Hastabhinaya* (hand gestures and elaborations) of *Kathakali*, 'c' is '*Netrabhinaya*' of *Koodiyattam*, 'd' is Body movements and costume design of *Tiruvathir aKali* and 'e' is 'Movement patterns and *Kutcheri* tradition of *Bharathanatyam*'. The circles are adjoined to imply the role of adaptation and hybridisation in the process of the development of *Mohiniyattam*.]

The repertoire of the form was unclear in the beginning. It is shown at the top of the diagram as 'abstract repertoire'. The initial teachers did not have teaching experience of the form. They conceptualised the form and put it into the practice format only by recollecting the withered images of the form that they gained from their childhood. Thus, the delivery was in a fragmented pattern. Their teaching was not focused on *Mohiniyattam*. Because of the unavailability of teaching materials, they had to compromise on *Mohiniyattam* and depend on other dance sources to

conduct the classes at the institution.²⁰⁴ The non-constructed aspects of *Mohiniyattam* had been followed till 1950s when Chinnammu Amma and Kalyanikuttyamma formed their repertoire. The construct which is indicated in red colour is of Kalamandalam Kalyanikuttyamma and the one indicated in blue is of Chinnammu Amma. These two became the most sought-after styles/ schools in *Mohiniyattam*. The vertical lines shown in the diagram indicate the lucidness of the style and the methodology. From this point the methodology of *Mohiniyattam* became solid and structured. Thus, class delivery from this stage is vertical. Amalgamation of these two constructs paved way for new constructs in the language of *Mohiniyattam*. The amalgamation of these two different constructs have been made through the practice of artistes who were trained in the respective styles. According to the Bodden theory of creativity, this model of experimentation in *Mohiniyattam* may fall under the combinational model of creativity.²⁰⁵

The experimentation also raises an important concern. Why is it combinational? The constructs have been made by inculcating ideas of different traditions. Influence of art forms like *Kathakali* and other performing art traditions of native culture is undeniably visible in these constructs. *Netrabhinaya* (eye expressions) of *Koodiyattam* is also being utilised in the new constructs of *Mohiniyattam* that is branched out from these two major constructs.

Combinational Model of *Mohiniyattam* Pedagogic Construct

It is only in the recent times, the constructs of *Mohiniyattam* practice and pedagogy format were properly formulated. It is also evident from the experiences of *Gurus*²⁰⁶ who learnt *Mohiniyattam* initially from the frame of institution that, *Mohiniyattam* took shape into a pedagogic and performance structure through the inculcation of the ideas of the performance realities of the neighboring art forms. *Gurus* of *Mohiniyattam* have often duly expressed how indebted is their art form to *Kathakali* and its *mastreos*. Certainly, the pedagogic and performance ideas of both

²⁰⁴ During that time the dance pedagogy of Kerala did not have specific genres. Interestingly, a particular genre was much-received during that age that were the dances of the filmy songs. Teachers used to incorporate different genres of movements in that pattern of dancing and it was also widely popular in Kerala.

²⁰⁵ Creative production is done through inculcating two or more different ideas of the same construct. (Margret Bodden)

²⁰⁶ Information gained from the interviews of *Mohiniyattam* Teachers; Kalamandalam Sugandhi, Kalamandalam Chandrika, Kalamandalam Vimala Menon etc.

Kalamandalam and *Kalamadalam Kalyanikuttiyamma* schools have been moulded through the combinational method of creation. A pictorial idea is represented above to illustrate the ‘combinational’-relation of the respective constructs clearly. It is the body movements and exercise patterns of *Kathakali*, *Hashtabhinaya* (hand gestures and elaborations) of *Kathakali*, ‘*Netrabhinaya*’ of *Koodiyattam*, body movements and costume design of *Tiruvathira Kali*, movement patterns and Kutcheri tradition of *Bharathanatyam*’ which contributed together to the growth of *Mohiniyattam* dance under the above constructs.

Exploratory Model of *Mohiniyattam* Pedagogic Construct

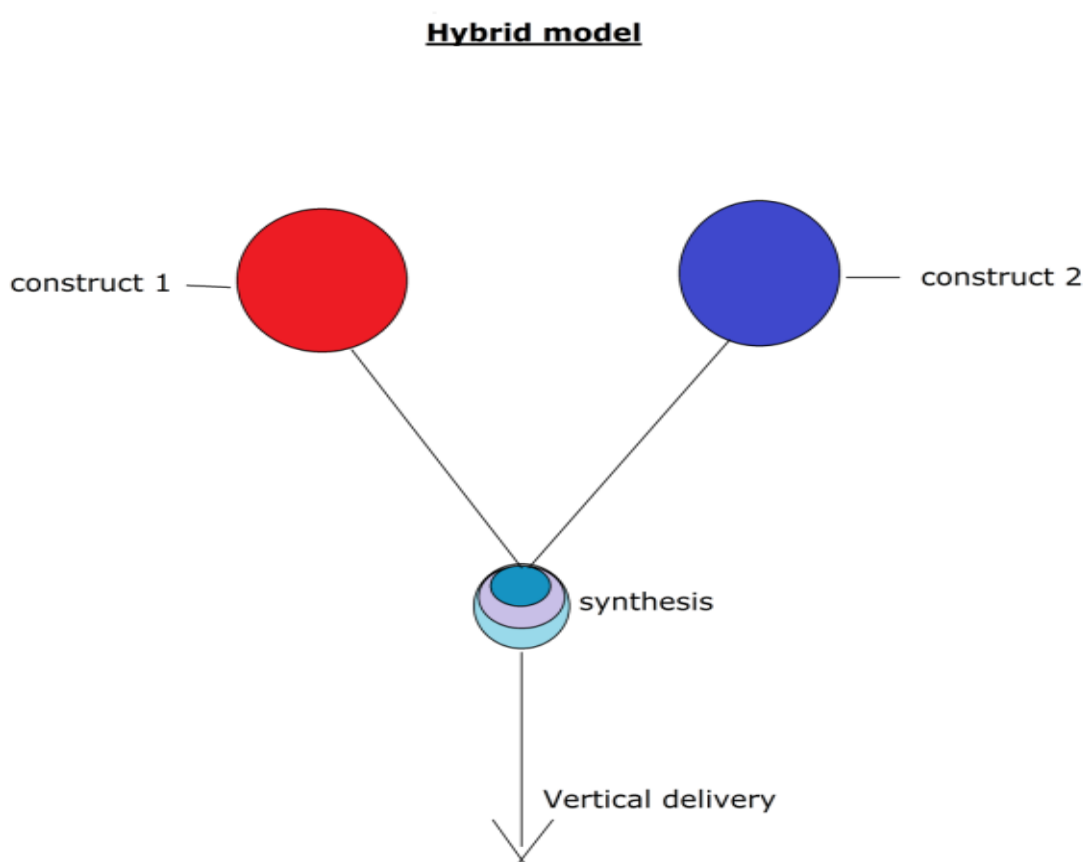
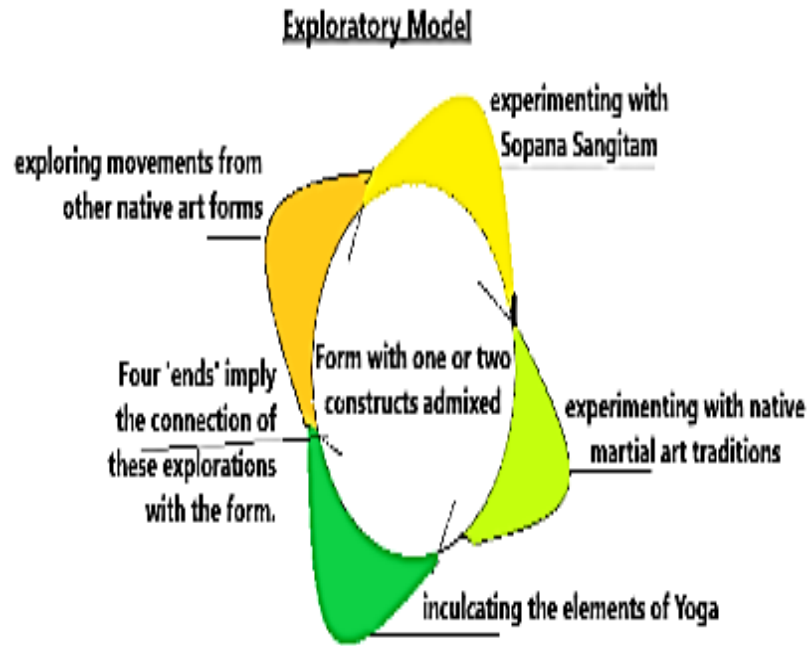


Plate no. 4.14

[Diagram note: This model is titled as ‘Hybrid’. In this model the form is developed through the ideas of different constructs. The red circle indicates construct-1 (*Kalyanikuttiyamma* school) of *Mohiniyattam* pedagogy and the Blue one is the 2nd construct (*Kalamandalam* school). The layers of colours given to the below circle are in order to show the procedure of synthesis and development of the form through different explorations. The vertical line under that, exhibits the structured and systematic mode of delivery of the developed ideas of the form.]



[Diagram note: This model is just another interpretation of the above one. It is titled as 'exploratory'. The central circle in white colour is to show the idea about the form which is made of one or two constructs. The curves coloured in yellow and green shades indicate the explorations of the form with other similar traditions. The curves are limited to certain space, because the explorations in this model do not tend to cross the frame of concept of the form. The four tips of the lines shown inside the white circle imply the connection of the explorations with the form. The thick yellow colour is given to the explorations of the form with other native performance traditions such as the folk forms of *Shakti* cult. The primary yellow is to mention the experimentations of *Sopana* Music tradition in *Mohiniyattam*. The light green is the explorations of the form with martial art traditions of the land. The primary green indicates the role of *Yoga* in the explorations of the form. In this model of creative exploration, the form is not explored outside the frames of its culture.]

Hybridity of the styles is an unavoidable aspect in the present situation of the art form. The amalgam of different constructs could make a synthesis of the form and further it could be developed and passed down as a firm construct with vertical delivery. Today, this model could be seen in the practices of many off-shoots of the primary constructs of the form. The style of Bharathi Shivaji is predominant in this regard as it was the initial construct of *Mohiniyattam* which was done through this model. In her case, she is not only an artiste who has been thoroughly trained in two major styles but also a scholar with keen knowledge and research capacity in the field to make reverberating ideas successful on stage. This construct has also been developed by the genuine interests of research and experimentations in the field. Diagrammatic representation of this model is given above with two sides of

interpretation. One is 'Hybrid' and the next is 'Exploratory'. A synthesis of two major constructs with effective explorations of creativity constitutes this model.

Self Created and Transformational Model of MohiniyattamPedagogic Construct

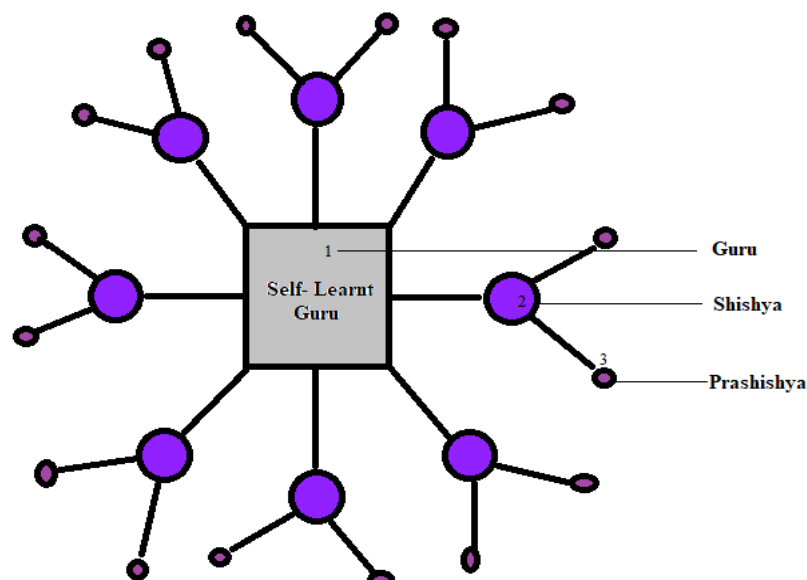


Plate no. 4.16

[Diagram note: This diagram maps the pedagogic model of the self-initiated construct. The square at the centre denotes the creator of the construct while the circles around imply the first learners of the construct. Further circles are the learners of secondary level of the pedagogic growth. The vertical lines indicate the face to face system of teaching (or direct learning).

Transformational Model

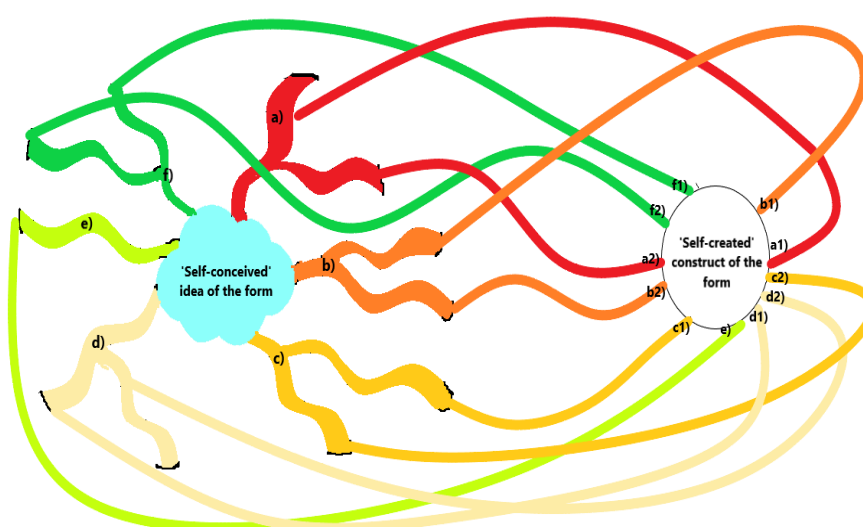


Plate no. 4.17

[Diagram note: This diagram showcases the creative model of development of the construct. The cloud on the left side indicates the self-conceived idea of the form. The branches / loops in different colours particularize the different creative ideas emerged in the thought of the creator in connection with the conceivment of the form. For instance, ‘a’ implies the idea of particular movement pattern, emerged out of the ethnic traditions of the land. While, ‘b’ could be the reinvented connections of the ethnic music traditions. The creativity could be further developed from this point. Thus, a1 could be the movement pattern observed from the age-old sculptures of the land and a2 is the movement patterns emerged from the ancient paintings or sources like that. On the right side, one is able to see the circle titled self-created -construct of the form. This circle indicates the definite form which has been constructed by the (loops) ideas (major and subsidiaries) from the left side.]

Some constructs in *Mohiniyattam* have grown out of the self-learnt Gurus. The term ‘self-learnt’ here has a greater significance than its literal meaning. A self-learnt guru is who gained the knowledge of the form from his/her research experiences and developed a construct of the form out of the gained knowledge incorporating his/her own creative models. There, the teaching is peculiarly vertical (lucid and direct) as the source person (*Guru*) of the construct is firm in her methodology and also rich in her repertoire. The source person of this construct is from a well-trained and scholastic background and developed the form according to the ethnographical understanding of the root of the form. Though the experimentations of this construct has produced exploratory models of the art form, it has also at times explored the ‘transformative’ ideas of the same.²⁰⁷

The above discussed constructs of the form established the proper idea of pedagogy in the realm of *Mohiniyattam* and also flourished them through different mediums of the form such as practice, pedagogy and performance. The proper perpetuation of these constructs instigated *Mohiniyattam* to pursue through different models of creativity. Hence, the new additions which were experimented on the constructs led to the further branching of *Mohiniyattam*.

Section II

Developing Pedagogic Landscapes & Blooming Branches of *Mohiniyattam*

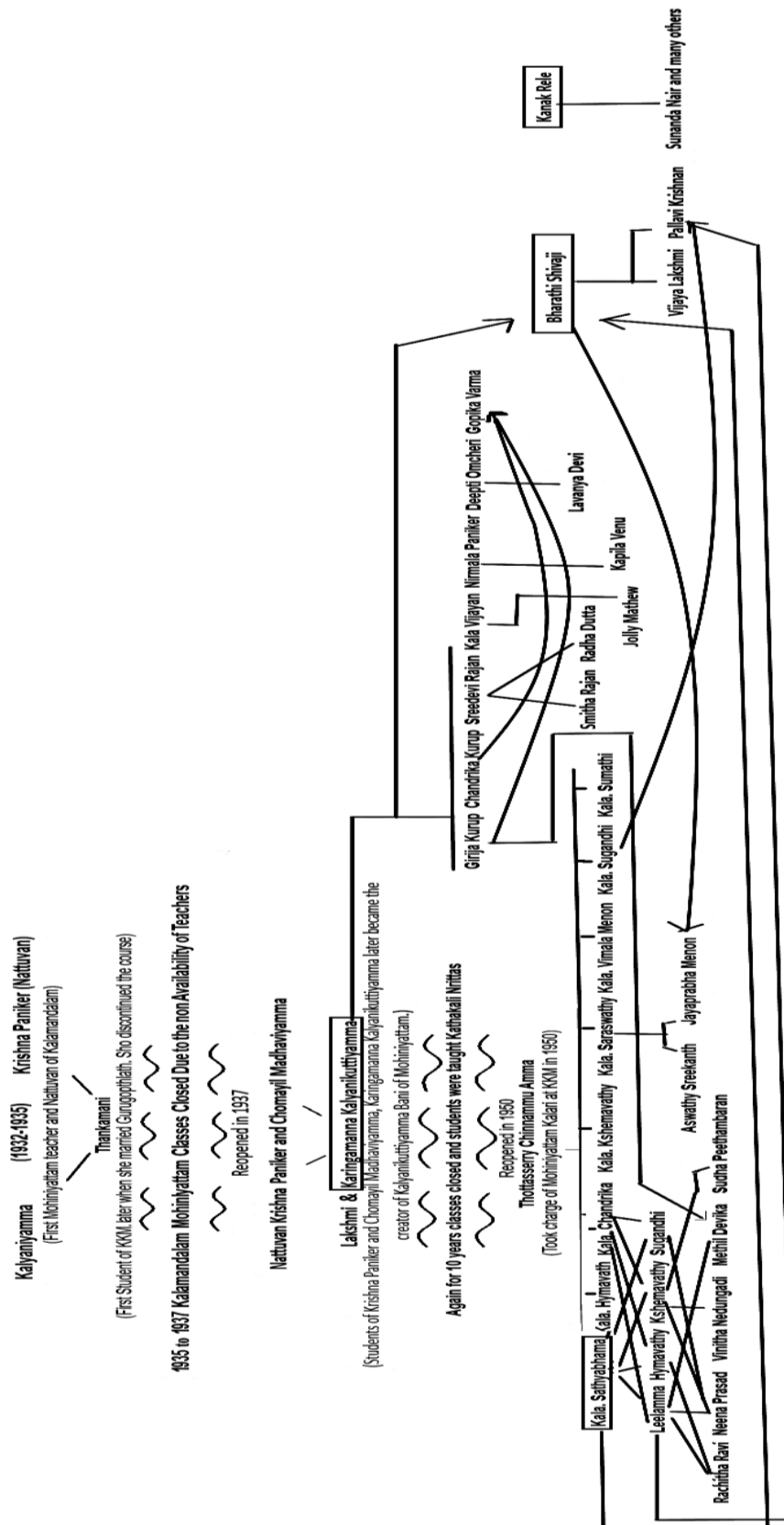
The teaching methodology of *Mohiniyattam* had grown into a lively field initially under the efforts of the gurus, Kalamandalam Kalyanikuttyamma and Kalamandalam Sathyabhama. These major umbrellas paved the way for the

²⁰⁷ Explorations have been worked in the frame of the construct without taking out the previous essence of the form. The form under explorative models of experimentations do change to some extent, but not fully. In the transformational level, the art form is being subjected to crucial changes inside-out.

emergence of new branches of diverse pedagogic practices in the domain of the art form. To set about and implement a feasible methodology for the practicum had been the foremost challenging aspect for these schools of dance. Success and survival from this crisis accorded *Mohiniyattam* the strength to pass through ages with its vibrancy. These scientific pedagogic formations happened in the realm of *Mohiniyattam* in the 1950s. In the 1970s two trailblazing attempts enhanced the repertoire of *Mohiniyattam*. As discussed earlier, two schools moulded by Kanak Rele and Bharathi Shivaji brought out a current of fresh air into the realm of *Mohiniyattam*. Even though they were non-malayalis, to a great extent, they could sympathetically revive the cultural ethos of *Mohiniyattam*.

The first part of the chapter provided a clear account on the development of these four major schools of *Mohiniyattam* and the present one delves into the study of the disintegration of the dance form into further major and minor branches. Before opening up the study, the researcher would like to bring to notice a flow chart for assuring a lucid reading in this regard and would be followed by the detailed description of the major *Gurus* of those schools and their major contributions.

FLOW CHART ON MOHINIYATTAM PEDAGOGY



[Flowchart 4.1 Note: The flowchart includes the list of major teachers and their disciples with a chronological time period from top to down. **Four major schools** of *Mohiniyattam* are portrayed in this flowchart.

The pedagogic lineage starts with the tutelage of **Kalyaniyamma** and **Krishna Panicker** in **1932** and their disciple **Thankamani** is mentioned right under the line. This lineage broke out as neither the teacher and nor the student continued at the institute after **1935**.

The **curves** indicate the **break in the existing teaching system** of the institute.

The teaching of *Mohiniyattam* at the institute reopened under the tutelage of **Krishna panicker** and **Chomayil Madhaviyamma** (from the indigenous tradition of *Mohiniyattam*) in **1937**. Their noted disciples were **Karingamanna Kalyanikuttiyamma** and **Lakshmi**. Karingamanna Kalyanikuttiyamma later established her own school in *Mohiniyattam*.

The names of individuals which are given in **boxes** imply the **schools of Mohiniyattam** that got developed from their efforts.

Kalyanikuttiyamma's direct disciples are **Sreedevi Rajan, Kala Vijayan, Girija Kurup, Chandrika Kurup, Nirmala Panicker, Smitha Rajan, Bharathi Shivaji** and many others, given under her name. **Smitha Rajan, Gopika Varma, Methil Devika** and many others come under the tutelage of the direct disciple of this school. The school of Bharathi Shivaji is given on the right side, also denoting the followers of her school.

Kalamandalam School was reopened in 1950 after a long gap under the tutelage of **Thottassery Chinnammu Amma** (from the indigenous tradition of *Mohiniyattam*). Her noted disciples are **Sathyabhama, Hymavathy, Kshemavathy, Chandrika, Saraswathy, Vimala, Sugandhi** and so on. Their direct disciples are **Kshemavathy** (The same kshemavathy who is mentioned earlier. She has also learnt from Sathyabhama), **Sugandhi** (the same sugandhi who is mentioned in the above line, has also learnt from Sathyabhama) **Leelamma** (learnt from Sathyabhama and Chandrika), **Hymavathy** (learnt from Sathyabhama and Chandrika. Not to be confused with the previous Hymavathy). **Neena Prasad** (learnt from Kshemavathy, Sugandhi and Leelamma), **Pallavi Krishnan** (learnt from Sugandhi and Bharathi Shivaji) **Sudha Peethambharan** (learnt from Mohana Thulasi), **Vinitha Nedungadi** (learnt from Kshemavathy), **Aswathy Sreekanth** (learnt from Saraswathy), **Jayaprabha Menon** (learnt from Saraswathy and Bharathi Shivaji), **Methil Devika** (learnt under Girija Kurup and Kalamandalam Leelamma), **Rachitha Ravi** (learnt under Kalamandalam Leelamma and Kalamandalam Hymavathi) and many others also come under this generation of artistes.

The school of Kanak Rele is denoted as a separate entity as she created the school of *Mohiniyattam* through her own understanding of the field. Her noted disciples are **Sunanda Nair, Mandakini Trivedi** and many others.

The school of Bharathi Shivaji is portrayed under the Kalyanikuttiyamma school on the right side of the diagram. She established the school of *Mohiniyattam* on her own ideas which had gained from her through research in the field, inculcating the practical lessons learnt from Kalamandalam Kalyanikuttiyamma. Her noted disciples are **Vijayalakshmi, Pallavi Krishnan, Jayaprabha Menon** and many others.]

Offshoots of Mohiniyattam Pedagogy

The offshoots of major *Mohiniyattam* schools are given below in tables which articulate their native place, commencement of dance learning, *Gurus* under whom they have sought dance training, commencement of career as a teacher, works and choreographies and their disciples. The pedagogic approach of these offshoots is noted down at the end of each tables. The native and residential place is mentioned

here to illustrate the geographical growth and reach of *Mohiniyattam* through the ages. The case studies here are selected on the basis of their contributions and visibility in the field of *Mohiniyattam* teaching and practice. And it is ordered according to their seniority of the teaching practice.²⁰⁸

4.2 Sreedevi Rajan (Kalyanikuttiyamma School)	
Native place:	Tripunitura
Commencement of Dance Learning:	At the tender age of four at <i>Keralakalalayam</i> (The institute founded by her mother Kalyanikuttiyamma)
Gurus and styles	Kalamandalam Kalyanikuttiyamma (<i>Mohiniyattam</i>)
Commencement of Career as Teacher:	<i>Nrityakshetra</i> , Cochin in 1950's
Works and Choreography:	<i>Surya kanthi</i> , <i>Jnanapana</i> , <i>Kottichethametc.</i>
Disciples:	Smitha Rajan, Gopika Varma, Radha Dutta, Priyadarshini Ghosh, Shyamala Surendran, Deepthi Omchery Bhalla, Sandhya Rajmohan, ennekattu Nrayanankutty, Hisayo Watanabe, Lawrence Fallot and many others

- Pedagogic approach; Traditionalistic, she is firm in the methodology developed by her mother Kalamandalam Kalyanikuttiyamma. She ardently follows the tradition besides expanding it with fresh set of *Adavus* of the same movement-culture. Through teaching *Mohiniyattam* she upholds the traditional value that had been passed down to her by her mother and thus she strictly opposes any efforts that compromises the style/ school, she follows.

4.3 Kala Vijayan (Kalyanikuttiyamma School)	
Native place:	Tripunitura
Commencement of Dance Learning:	At <i>Kerala Kalalayam</i> at the age of 4 in 1944
Gurus and styles	Kalamandalam Kalyanikuttiyamma (<i>Mohiniyattam</i>)

²⁰⁸ Only 24 cases are taken out of the total numbers of offshoots. These 24 have been taken on the basis of their specialization in teaching *Mohiniyattam*. All offshoots could not carry in this study because of the limitations of data.

Commencement of Career as Teacher:	At <i>Kerala Kalalayam</i> in 1957, Tripunitura
Works and Choreography:	Devi stuti, Ganapathi Sthuthi etc.
Disciples:	Smitha Rajan

- Pedagogic approach: Strongly rooted in the tradition.

4.4 Kalamandalam Mohana Thulasi (Kalamandalam school)	
Native place:	Kaloor, Ernakulam, Kerala
Commencement of Dance Learning:	At <i>Kerala Kalamandalam</i> in 1954.
Gurus and styles	Kalamandalam Chinnammuamma (<i>Mohiniyattam</i>), Raja Ratnam Pillai (<i>Bharathanatyam</i>), Vemapti Chinnasathyam, Bala Kondala Rao (<i>Kuchipudi</i>)
Commencement of Career as Teacher:	At <i>LalithakalaSadanam</i> (established by her guru Rajaratnam Pillai) in 1962. It was established in Shoranur and shifted to Kaloor, Ernakulam.
Works and Choreography:	She choreographed numerous <i>Swati kritis</i> in <i>Mohiniyattam</i> and <i>Kuchipudi</i>
Disciples:	Sudha Peethambaran, Soumya Sathish and many others

- Pedagogic approach: Even though her specialization is on Kuchipudi she teaches three forms of South Indian Classical dances; Bharathanatyam, *Mohiniyattam*, Kuchipudi etc. As she learnt *Mohiniyattam* from Chinnammu Amma, her style is akin to that school.

4.5 Kalamandalam Chandrika Menon (Kalamandalam school)	
Native place:	Edappally, Ernakulam, Kerala
Commencement of Dance Learning:	At <i>Kerala Kalamandalam</i> in 1957.
Gurus and styles	Kalamandalam Chinnammuamma (<i>Mohiniyattam</i>), Vedantam Prahlada Sharma (<i>Kuchipudi</i>)
Commencement of Career as Teacher:	At <i>Kerala Kalamandalam</i> in 1964

Works and Choreography:	She choreographed numerous productions from the Puranic themes including <i>Ramayana</i> , <i>Bhasmasura-mohini</i> etc.
Disciples:	Kalamandalam Kshemavati, Kalamandalam Sugandhi, Kalamandalam Leelamma, Kalamandalam Hymavathy

- Pedagogic approach; Traditionalistic. She started her teaching career at *Kalamandalam* as the successor of Thottasserry Chinnammuamma in 1964. As it was the infancy stage of the art form under the institution, they had only a few items to practice and no sheer structure was formed. Kalamandalam Chandrika became the reason to bring about *Kuchipudi* into the curriculum of the institute later. She was so sincere to her profession and she says her classes at *Kalamandalam* used to go beyond the scheduled time and room. She used to teach the lessons of *Kuchipudi* unofficially to her students at *Kalamandalam*. (It was unofficial because *Kuchipudi* was not then implemented as a course subject in *Kalamandalam*.)

4.6 Kalamandalam Kshemavathi (Kalamandalam School)	
Native place:	Viyur, Thrissur
Commencement of Dance Learning:	At <i>Kalamandalam</i> in 1958 and in 1963 she passed out from the institute.
Gurus and styles	Pazhayannur Thottasserry Chinnammuamma, Kalamandalam Sathyabhama (<i>Mohiniyattam</i>) Thanjaor Bhaskara Rao, Muthuswami Pillai, Chithra Vishweswaran (<i>Bharathanatyam</i>), Vempati Chinnaasathyam (<i>Kuchipudi</i>)
Commencement of Career as Teacher:	Institution established in Thrissur in 1963.
Works and Choreography:	Several Poems, <i>Ganeshastuti</i> , <i>Anandaganapati-Sopanam</i> , <i>Narayaneeyam-Kuchelavritam</i> , <i>Astanayika</i> , <i>Ashtarasam</i> , Gazals including her master piece items, <i>Rathrimazha</i> , <i>Krishna Neeenneariyilla</i> (Poems by Sugathakumari) etc.
Disciples:	Vinitha Nedungadi, Neena Prasad and many others

- Pedagogic approach; Basics are traditional but more innovative in approaches. Her strong appetite in moulding dance pedagogy with least lacunas in its

musical, rhythmic and histrionic realms is visible in the works of her and her disciples. She formulated and named different *Adavus* and developed an apt methodology for teaching *Abhinaya*. Watching her doing the innovative works itself was a learning experience for dance students to grasp *lasya-abhinaya*.

4.7 Kalamandalam Saraswathy (Kalamandalam School)	
Native place:	Kuzhalmanthom, Palaghat
Commencement of Dance Learning:	At <i>Kalamandalam</i> in 1960 and passed out with first rank from the institution in 1964.
Gurus and styles	Pazhayannur Thottasserry Chinnammuamma, Kalamandalam Sathyabhama, Kalamandalam Kalyanikuttyamma, (<i>Mohiniyattam</i>) Thanjaor Bhaskara Rao, Dr. Padma Subramaniam, Dr. Chithra Vishweshwaran (<i>Bharathanatyam</i>) Guru Vempati Chinnasathyam (<i>Kuchipudi</i>).
Commencement of Career as Teacher:	Institution established at Chalappuram, Calicut <i>Nrityalaya</i> in 1972.
Works and Choreography:	Her group productions include; <i>Kumaranasan's Chintavishtayaya Seetha</i> , <i>Mahakavi Kalidasa's Ritusamhara</i> , <i>Sivaleela</i> , <i>Panchatantram</i> , <i>Dashavataram</i> , <i>Narthana Ganapathy</i> etc.
Disciples:	Vineeth Radhakrishnan (not a Mohiniyattam artiste), Aswathy Sreekanth and many others

- Pedagogic approach; Traditionalistic. Her approach is characterised by the intense mode of holistic training. She groomed aplenty students throughout Kerala. The bodily exercises of circular motions are given more importance in her training. Along with her artistry and body-flexibility she keeps the authenticity of *Kalamandalam* style alive through her performance till today.

4.8 Kalamandalam Vimala Menon (Kalamandalam School)	
Native place:	Iringalakkuda, Thrissur
Commencement of Dance Learning:	At <i>Kalamandalam</i> in 1960 and in 1964 she passed out from the institute.
Gurus and styles	Pazhayannur Thottasserry Chinnammuamma (<i>Mohiniyattam</i>) Thanjaor Bhaskara Rao (<i>Bharathanatyam</i>)
Commencement of Career as Teacher:	She Started the career at the teacher in 1967 at Jawahar Balabhavan, Trivandrum. Established her Institute <i>Kerala Natya Academy</i> at Trivandrum in 1972.
Works and Choreography:	Her effort on altering the convictions of solo system of the art form into the group-oriented form can be considered as the most remarkable one among her all other contributions. She renovated <i>PanthadiNritta</i> in <i>Mohiniyattam</i> to an individual featured form, and for this piece of work she took only percussion instruments for giving the back score. She introduced the coloured line border to the white and gold attire of <i>Mohiniyattam</i> . She used red colour for emphasising <i>roudra rasa</i> and <i>Green</i> for <i>Sringara Rasa</i> . She also introduced the percussion instruments like <i>Thimila</i> and <i>Thakil</i> to the practice of the art form.
Disciples:	Vinduja Menon (She stays and teaches in Malaysia.)

- Pedagogic approach: She follows a holistic approach. Her vision and practice of *Mohiniyattam* particularly concentrates on the Chinnammu Amma style of *Mohiniyattam* as she is one of the direct disciples of Chinnammu Amma. She clusters her students into different age groups and treats them in different manners, utilizing different psychological techniques. She gives her attention more on the bodily movement exercises of her students to shape the respective movement culture in them. She had also modified certain *Adavus* and *mudras*, positioning the *mudras* and enhancing it with the nuances of *Kathakali*.

4.9 Kalamandalam Sugandhi (Amalgam of Kalamandalam & Kalyanikuttyamma schools)	
Native place:	Thuravur
Commencement of Dance Learning:	At <i>Kalamandalam</i> in 1960 and in 1964 she graduated from the institute. (She was 16 years old when she joined Kalamandalam as a student)
Gurus and styles	Thuravur Satidevi, Palluruthi Surendranath (folk dance and <i>Bharathanatyam</i>), Kalamandalam Sathyabhama (<i>Mohiniyattam</i>), A R R Bhaskara Rao (<i>Bharathanatyam</i>), Kalamandalam Chandrika, Kalamandalam Kalyanikuttyamma (<i>Mohiniyattam</i>) (She learnt theory and applications of <i>Natyasastra</i> from Dr Padma Subramanyam).
Commencement of Career as Teacher:	At FACT, Cochin
Works and Choreography:	Apart from the conventional usage of <i>Mohiniyattam</i> literature, she brought out new numbers from other <i>Vak-geyakaaras</i> . Her major choreographic numbers including, <i>Navarathri Kirtanas of Swati</i> , <i>Annamacharya-kirtanas</i> , <i>slokas from Kalidasa's Malavikagnimitram etc.</i>
Disciples	Neena Prasad, Gopika Varma, Pallavi Krishnan and many others

- Pedagogic approach: Inclusive and holistic. When Kalamandalam formed the teaching methodology of *Mohiniyattam* under the keen effort of Kalamandalam Sathyabhama, Sugandhi was the senior student there and she was taking her part as an instrument in implementing the pedagogic system. She upholds the pedagogic value and strategy of the same school yet sometimes she applies nuances from the other schools of *Mohiniyattam* according to the body language of her students. She values both the school (Kalamandalam and Kalyanikuttyamma) and has developed a firm methodology incorporating both these schools of *Mohiniyattam* with the potent brace of *Natyasastra*.

4.10 Kalamandalam Leelamma (Kalamandalam School)	
Native place:	Mattakkara, Kottayam
Commencement of Dance Learning:	At Kalamandalam in 1968 and in 1971 she passed out from the institute.
Gurus and styles:	Kalamandalam Sathyabhama (<i>Mohiniyattam</i>), A R R Bhaskara Rao (<i>Bharathanatyam</i>), Kalamandalam Chandrika (<i>Mohiniyattam</i> and <i>Kuchipudi</i>)
Commencement of Career as Teacher:	At Kalamandalam in 1972
Works and Choreography:	She disciplined the <i>Kalamandalam</i> school of Mohiniyattam, adding vibrant movement patterns according to the soil of its <i>Lasya</i> culture. With her presentations and thorough teaching, she popularized traditional numbers of Maharaja Swati Tirunal. She broke the conventional idea of <i>Rasas</i> and themes in <i>Mohiniyattam</i> by adapting <i>Roudrarasa</i> and the story of Siva as the central role. She has choreographed many traditional numbers including <i>Cholkettu</i> , <i>Jatiswaram</i> , <i>Varnam</i> , <i>Padam</i> , <i>Thillana</i> etc. while her experimental endeavors are; <i>Bhajans</i> of Swathi Tirunal, excerpts from Kalidasa's <i>Shakuntalam</i> and <i>Ritusamharam</i> , <i>Rasakreeda</i> , <i>Dasavatharam</i> (Myth of 10 incarnations of lord Vishnu), "Jayadeva's <i>Geetagoavindam</i> , <i>Ramayana</i> of Thunchathu Ramanujan Ezhuthachan, <i>Kalyana Sougandhikam</i> of Kunchan Nambiar, <i>Leela</i> and <i>Veena Poovu</i> of Kumaran Assan, <i>Magdalana Mariyyam</i> and many small poems of Vallathol, <i>Mambazham</i> of Vailopilly Sreedhara Menon, <i>Ujjaini</i> of ONV Kurup, <i>Narayaneeyam</i> of Melpathur Narayana Bhatathiri" (Kalamandalam Leelamma, Interview, 17, March, 2016).
Disciples:	Pallavi Krishnan, Methil Devika, Kalamandalam Rachitha Ravi, Kalamandalam Nikhila, RajasreeWarrier and many others

- Pedagogic approach; Inclusive and holistic. Teaching methodology that she has developed is sophisticated and well-disciplined. Out of the vocabulary formed by her teacher Kalamandalam Sathyabhama, she expanded further the movement potentials of *Mohiniyattam*. She modified and successfully implemented several groups of *Adavus* (more than eighty *Adavus*) into the repertoire of *Kalamandalam School of Mohiniyattam*. She teaches the students

according to their body languages. She watches, cares and corrects each of her students individually even when the class is packed with students. As a teacher, she did not just push her modules off in the syllabus despite her concentration was on perfecting the movement and the technique. Thus, at times, one movement is more of a single entity to be carried out in her class. Her methodological approach is also characterised by her understanding and utilization of kinaesthetic dichotomy in her class.

4.11 Nirmala Paniker (Kalyanikuttiyamma School with innovations)	
Native place:	Piravam
Commencement of Dance Learning:	In 1966, at the age of 16 from R L V, Tripunithura
Gurus and styles:	Kalkshetra Vilasini (<i>Bharathanatyam</i>), RLV Radhamani (<i>Bharathanatyam</i>) Kalamandalam Kalyanikuttiyamma and Kalamandalam Sathyabhama (<i>Mohiniyattam</i>), Bhanu Master, Lakshmikuttiyamma, Savithri Brahmani Amma (<i>Thiruvathirakali</i>)
Commencement of Career as Teacher:	Joined as faculty of dance at Lawrence School, Lovedale in 1974. And she founded her own institute of <i>Mohiniyattam</i> , <i>Natana Kaishiki</i> in 1979 at Irinjalakkuda.
Works and Choreography:	Choreographed Kumaranasan's <i>Leela</i> in <i>Mohiniyattam Saptham</i> , Revitalised the <i>Desi</i> traditions of <i>Mohiniyattam: Poli, Easal, Mukkutti, Chandanam</i>
Disciples:	Kapila Venu, Sandra Pisharody, Parvathi Sreevallabhan and many others

- Pedagogic approach- Inclusive and holistic, she has developed a firm methodology for *Mohiniyattam* practicum. She revitalised the old traditions of female dancing patterns of Kerala and made appropriate orientation of allied forms (*NangiarKoothu* and *Thiruvathirakali*) of *Mohiniyattam* in the technique and *abhinaya* of *Mohiniyattam*.

4.12 KalamandalamHymavathi (Kalamandalam School)	
Native place:	Thrissur
Commencement of Dance Learning:	At <i>Kalamandalam</i> in 1968 and in 1972 she passed out from the institute.
Gurus and styles:	Kalamandalam Sathyabhama (<i>Mohiniyattam</i>), A R R Bhaskara Rao (<i>Bhatahanatyam</i>), Kalamandalam Chandrika (<i>Mohiniyattam</i> , <i>Bharathanatyam</i> , <i>Kuchipudi</i>), Kalamandalam Leelamani (<i>Mohiniyattam</i>)
Commencement of Career as Teacher:	At Kalamandalam 1977.
Works and Choreography:	She wrote and choreographed herself about more than twenty <i>Varnas</i> and numerous <i>Padams</i> . She recreated several poems of veteran Malayalam poets in several esteemed plat forms. She tried to emphasise more of <i>Lokadharmi</i> in her solos. IrayimmanThampi's ' <i>Omanathingal Kidavo</i> ' and ' <i>Ambadi Thannil Orunni Undangane</i> ' are great examples for execution of natural-Abhinaya in her repertoire.
Disciples:	Kalamandalam Rachitha Ravi, Kalamandalam Nikhila and many others

- Pedagogic approach; Traditionalistic, she started her dance-teaching career at *Kalamandalam* after four years of the completion of her course. She is well disciplined as a teacher. She gives practice to her students until she feels the thing is taught completely. She gives more importance to the bodily movement patterns and during the time of rehearsals she use to keenly see the character moulding and that is the opportunity for her students to learn the detailed nuances of *Lasyabhinaya*.

4.13 Smitha Rajan (Kalyanikuttiyamma school)	
Native place:	Tripunithura
Commencement of Dance Learning:	At a tender age, approximately around 1973.
Gurus and styles	Kalamandalam Kalyanikuttiyamma, Kala Vijayan, Sreedevi Rajan (<i>Mohiniyattam</i> and <i>Bharathanatyam</i>) Kalamandalam Krishnan Nair

	(<i>Mughajabhinaya</i> and <i>Hashtabhinaya</i>),
Commencement of Career as Teacher:	<i>Nrityakalakshetra</i> , St. Louis, USA
Works and Choreography:	Kanden Kanden Seethaye', Swati Thirunal Kritis etc.

- Pedagogic approach- Traditionalistic, she helps the students to grow mentally to receive the text of performance fully in order to portray it to the fullest. While, she doesn't deviate from the principles and the traditional values that has been taught to her by gurus, her disciplined knowledge in dance makes her class advanced and more constructive.

4.14 Sunanda Nair (Kanak Rele School)	
Native place:	Thrittala, Palakkadu
Commencement of Dance Learning:	At the age of 6 under Krishnan Kutty Warriar (<i>Bharathanatyam</i> & <i>Kathakali</i>) in 1984 under Kanak Rele
Gurus and styles	Krishnan Kutty Warriar (<i>Bharathanatyam</i> and <i>Kathakali</i>), Guru Deepak Mazoomdar (<i>Bharathanatyam</i>), Kalaimamani Mahalingam pillai (<i>Bharathanatyam</i>), Dr. Kanak Rele (<i>Mohiniyattam</i>)
Commencement of Career as Teacher:	At the age of 14 by assisting her teacher Krishnan Kutty Warriar. In 1990 joined as a lecturer at <i>Nalanda Nrityakala Mahavidyalaya</i> , University of Mumbai and she founded her institute <i>SPARC</i> in US in 2008.
Works and Choreography:	<i>Ananda Ganapathy</i> , <i>Mukhachalam</i> , <i>Ashta nayika</i> , <i>Sabari</i> , several <i>padams</i> of Swathi Thirunal and IrayimmanThampi including <i>Theliviyalum mugham</i> , <i>Poonthen-nermozhi</i> , <i>Prananadha</i> , <i>Omanathingalkidavo</i> etc
Disciples;	Arathy Ramesh, Suja Pillai, Saritha Warriar, DivyaShanker

- Pedagogic approach: She gives individual attention to each student. She aims to make her students capable of giving individual expressions to extend the tradition.

4.15 Sudha Peethambaran (Kalamandalamschool)	
Native place:	Ernakulam
Commencement of Dance Learning:	at the age of five
Gurus and styles	Kalamandalam Mohana Thulasi (<i>Mohiniyattam</i> , <i>Bharathanatyam</i> , <i>Kuchipudi</i>)
Commencement of Career as Teacher:	She established her institute <i>SreeSankara School of Dance</i> at Kalady in 1993
Works and Choreography:	Renowned <i>Natya Sastra</i> Scholar and <i>Kathakali</i> artiste, C P Unnikrishnan has choreographed peculiar productions for her. She reproduced them through her movement language and some of them are radical in theme. They include; <i>KanakadharaSthotram</i> , <i>Ashtanayikas</i> , <i>KrishnayaNamaha</i> , <i>Ashtapadi</i> , <i>Acharya SmaranamSharanam</i> , <i>BhajagovindamSmaranam</i> , <i>Sharanam</i> , <i>Krishna nee beganebaro</i> , <i>OmanaThingalKidavo</i> , <i>Ananda Ganapathi</i> etc. She also has stepped out from the usual staging concepts of <i>Mohiniyattam</i> to more reveratory aspects of the cultural history of Kerala through her productions.

- Pedagogic Approach: Sudha Peethambaran is known in Kerala for her systematic approach towards teaching dance. Her approach is a holistic one which provides students thorough knowledge on the practical and the theritical aspects of dance.

4.16 Neena Prasad (Amalgam of Kalamandalam and Kalyanikuttiyamma schools with innovations)	
Native place:	Trivandrum
Commencement of Dance Learning:	At a younger age (approximately at the end of 1980's)
Gurus and styles:	KalamandalamSugandhi (<i>Mohiniyattam</i> and <i>Bharathanatyam</i>), Kalamandalam Kshemavathi (<i>Mohiniyattam</i> , <i>Bharathanatyam</i> , <i>Kuchipudi</i>), Adayar K Lakshman (<i>Bharathanatyam</i>), PadmabhooshanVempattiChinnasathyam (<i>Kuchipudi</i>), Vempayam Appukkuttan Pillai (<i>Kathakali</i>).

Commencement of Career as Teacher:	Her Institution <i>Bharathanjali</i> established at Trivandrum in 1995. And ' <i>Sougandhika</i> ' Centre for <i>Mohiniyattam</i> established at Chennai in 2003.
Works and Choreography:	She choreographed many items in the genre of the traditional repertoire with sprinting themes. Among them <i>Panchabhootha Cholkettu</i> , <i>Shakuntalam</i> , <i>Amrapali</i> , <i>Urmila</i> are well received by the <i>Rasikas</i> .
Disciples:	No specific name found.

- Pedagogic approach: Inclusive and holistic. She has developed more than 100 *Adavusin Mohiniyattam*. She is also recognised as the first Keralite to take PhD in dance (*Lasya* and *Thandava* of South Indian Classical Dances). She prepares her students to pursue the art form as a whole. She gives them ideas about the technical, theoretical and practical aspects of *Mohiniyattam*. As an ardent researcher of dance, she could retrieve the old fragmented pieces of *Mohiniyattam* repertoire from Kalamandalam Padmini and others and successfully stage a full-length repertoire prepared by her in 1998.

4.17 Pallavi Krishnan (Amalgam of Kalamandalam and Bharathi Shivaji School)	
Native place:	Kolkata
Commencement of Dance Learning:	Shanti Niketan, Kolkatta, Kalamandalam (in 1992)
Gurus and styles	Kalamandalam Sankaranarayanan (<i>Kathakali</i>), Kalamandalam Leelamma (<i>Mohiniyattam</i>), Kalamandalam Sugandhi, Dr. Bharathi Shivaji (<i>Mohiniyattam</i>)
Commencement of Career as Teacher:	She founded her institute <i>LasyaAkademi</i> at Thrissur in 1995.
Works and Choreography:	<i>Rituranga</i> , <i>Salabanjika</i> , <i>Urvashi</i> , <i>Pancha Bhootha</i> , <i>Pingala</i> , <i>Dashavathar</i> , <i>Radha Madhavam</i> , <i>Kuthi Vikramorvaseeyam</i> etc.
Disciples:	Kalamandalam Nihila, Kalamandalam Chithra, Kalamandalam Soumya and many others

- Pedagogic approach; traditionalistic but open to innovations. She incorporates yoga in her class. Her methodology is a combination of Kalamandalam and Bharathi Shivaji schools of *Mohiniyattam*.

4.18 Vinitha Nedungadi (Individual expression)	
Native place:	Palakkad
Commencement of Dance Learning:	At an early age
Gurus and styles:	Kalamandalam Kshemavathi (<i>Mohiniyattam</i> and <i>Bharathanatyam</i>)
Commencement of Career as Teacher:	She founded her dance institute <i>Sreevidya Academy</i> at Palakkadu.
Works and Choreography:	<i>Omanathingalkidavo of IrayimmanThampi, Karukare Karmukil, Poothapattu, Geethanjali, Kalinga Narthana Thillana, Varshamohini, Thirusseva, Puzha</i> etc. are her noted choreographies. She renovated both the text and the performance of <i>Mohiniyattam</i> . She develops the movement patterns in <i>Mohiniyattam</i> attuned to the culture and the context of the performance. She has experimented with vocal text, <i>Aharya</i> , and other aspects of <i>Mohiniyattam</i> so far.
Disciples:	Divya Nedungadi, Athulya Rakesh and many others

- Pedagogic approach: Advanced and liberal (in making new choreo-texts in *Mohiniyattam*). Her teaching approach is much liberal as she allows her students to do new works on their own after a period of training. And also, she engages her students in different activities that are helpful to make their choreographic, rhythmic and imaginary skills grown. She introduces literature to her students in order to enhance creative slots in their right brain. She is keen to adapt fresh ideas to groom dance pedagogy.

4.19 Gopika Varma (Kalyanikuttiyamma school)	
Native place:	Trivandrum
Commencement of Dance Learning:	at the age of ten

Gurus and styles:	Geetha Gopalakrishnan, M M Pillai, Vazhavur Samraj, Girija Kurup, Chandrika Kurup (<i>Bharathanatyam</i>), Kalamandalam Kalyanikuttyamma (<i>Mohiniyattam</i>), Sreedevi Rajan, Kalamandalam Krishnan Nair (<i>Abhinaya</i>)
Commencement of Career as Teacher:	She established her institute <i>Dasyam</i> at Adyar, Chennai in 2002
Works and Choreography:	About fifty-four <i>Swati-kritis</i> she choreographed and staged so far. <i>Draupati</i> , <i>Ashtapadi</i> , <i>Karna Kunti Samvadham</i> , <i>Ambha Gouri Varnam</i> , <i>Bhagavatham</i> of Swathi Tirunal, a <i>kriti</i> in praise of <i>Padmanabhaswami temple</i> and deity are the other noted works.

- Pedagogic approach: Traditionalistic, she teaches *Mohiniyattam* to more than hundred students in Chennai. She implements the *Kalyanikuttyamma* school of *Mohiniyattam* in a full-fledged manner. Her aim is to bloom out of her students a passionate and keen-enthusiastic generation of *Mohiniyattam* artistes.

4.20 Jayaprabha Menon (Amalgam of KalamandalamSaraswathy And Bharathi Shivaji styles)	
Native place:	Kerala
Commencement of Dance Learning:	At a tender age
Gurus and styles:	Kalamandalam Saraswathy (<i>Mohiniyattam</i> and <i>Bharathanatyam</i>), Bharathi Shivaji (<i>Mohiniyattam</i>) C V Chandrashekhar (<i>Bharatanatyam</i>)
Commencement of Career as Teacher:	In 2005 she founded International Academy of <i>Mohiniyattam</i> at New Delhi.
Works and Choreography:	Her noted works include <i>Pancharatna Kriti</i> of Shadkala Govinda Marar in <i>Sopana</i> Style and the concept works such as <i>Tatwam</i> (a philosophical tale), <i>Gamanam</i> (rhythm and journey of water), <i>Chandrayanam</i> (the journey of moon), <i>Philosophy of Unity</i> , <i>Layalahiri</i> etc.
Disciples:	No data found.

- Pedagogic approach: No information found

4.21 Vijayalaxmi (Bharathi Shivaji School)	
Native place:	Delhi
Commencement of Dance Learning:	At the tender age of five under her mother Bharathi Shivaji.
Gurus and styles:	<i>Mohiniyattam</i> from Bharathi Shivaji apart from <i>Mohiniyattam</i> she is also trained in <i>Bharathanatyam</i> , <i>yoga</i> and <i>Kalaripayattu</i> .
Commencement of Career as Teacher:	Several years ago, at <i>Center for Mohiniyattam</i>
Works and Choreography:	<i>Unniyarcha</i> , <i>Swanlake</i> , <i>Paryapthi</i>
Disciple:	Nayanthara (her daughter) and many others

- Pedagogic Approach: No information found. Her artistic contributions are mostly known for her innovative choreographies.

4.22 Deepthi OmcheriBhalla (Individual expression)	
Native place:	Delhi
Commencement of Dance Learning:	At a tender age of three
Gurus and styles:	Punnathur Madhava Paniker, Guru Gopinath, Sadanam Nandakumar (<i>Kathakali</i>), Kalamandalam Kalyanikuttyamma (<i>Mohiniyattam</i>)
Commencement of Career as Teacher:	She is a professor in Carnatic music.
Works and Choreography:	<i>Shabdachaali</i> , <i>Nrittya Prabhandham</i> , <i>Vaadil Tura Pattu</i> , <i>Ardhanariswara</i> , <i>Samvada Padam</i> , <i>Daru Varnam</i> , <i>Dundubhi Natyam</i> etc.

- Pedagogic approach: No information found

4.23 Methil Devika (Individual expression)	
Native place:	Palghat (Born in Dubai)
Commencement of Dance Learning:	At the age of 6 in 1983
Gurus and styles:	Girija Chandran, Kalaimamani S Natarajan (<i>Bharatanatyam</i>), Kalamandalam Leelamma

	(<i>Mohiniyattam</i>)
Commencement of Career as Teacher:	<i>Sreepaada Natyakalari</i> , Ramanathapuram, Palakkadu in 2011
Works and Choreography:	She did most of her works based on ancient scriptures. And music is an important facet in her choreo pieces. Rather than conforming to one school, she utilizes many genres of music into her work. Tales of Folklore and local legends she executes in her works. She adapts Kerala's own percussion system into her dance works. Her noted works are <i>Cilappathikaram</i> and <i>Sarpatatwa</i>
Disciples;	Pooja Unni and many others

- Pedagogic approach: Innovative. She doesn't make her students depend upon her to some extent. She bestows them a fear-free atmosphere at the same time, keeps a detached attachment with the students.

4.24 Kalamandalam Rachitha Ravi (Kalamandalam School)	
Native place:	Kecheri, Thrissur
Commencement of Dance Learning:	At an early age, at <i>Kalamandalam</i> in 1996
Gurus and styles:	Kalamandalam Leelamma, Kalamandalam Hymavathy, Kalamandalam Lathika (<i>Mohiniyattam</i>), Kalamandalam Rajalakshmi (<i>Kuchipudi</i>)
Commencement of Career as Teacher:	In 2010, at Kalamandalam.
Works and Choreography:	<i>Karna, Brihannala</i>
Disciples:	Students of <i>Kalamandalam</i> 2007-18

- Pedagogic Strategy; Traditional. Even though her approach is traditional, she keeps a friendly relation with her students. Apart from teaching the craft she also motivates and encourages her students to be creative and thoughtful.

4.25 KalamandalamNikhila (Kalamandalam School)	
Native place:	Kolathur, Malappuram
Commencement of Dance Learning:	At <i>Kalamandalam</i> in 1997 and in 2009 she passed out with first rank in M P A from the institute.
Gurus and styles:	Kalamandalam Leelaamma, Kalamandalam Hymavathy, Kalamandalam Lathika (<i>Mohiniyattam</i> and <i>Bharathanatyam</i>)
Commencement of Career as Teacher:	Her own Institution ' <i>Rasa</i> ' established at Kolathur, Malappuram in 2013.
Works and Choreography:	Her solo and group productions including, <i>Ravana Puthri</i> , <i>Krishna Leela</i> , <i>Mandodari Varnam</i> , <i>Hidumbi</i> , <i>Damayanti</i> , <i>Ethanaikoti Imbam</i> of <i>Subramania Bharati</i> , <i>Pancha Bhootha</i> (work in progress) etc.
Disciples:	Post Graduate Students of Kalamandalam

- Pedagogic Strategy; One unique factor she applies on her teaching methodology is the concern about the student's body. Each body demands a different approach of teaching or correcting a movement pattern. She starts her training by introducing the movement nature of *Mohiniyattam* as it is a complex compendium of torso and waist movements. And she also brings ample attention to the special structures included in the movement patterns in her class, dictating the correct special measurements of the movement. More interesting perceptions of this young teacher will be discussed in detail in the upcoming chapter.

4.26 Divya Nedungadi (VinithaNedungadi School)	
Native place:	Kolkata
Commencement of Dance Learning:	1992
Gurus and styles:	VinithaNedungadi (<i>Mohiniyattam</i>)
Commencement of Career as Teacher:	At Kalady University in 2013, at the Institution, <i>Deeksha</i> established by herself in 2015.

Works and Choreography:	Cholkettu, Padam, Kirtanam, Shloham, Navarasanjali, Badrageethi, Swayamvaram, Rativilapam etc.
Disciples:	Anisha and many others

- Pedagogic Strategy: Her dance teaching solely concentrates on *Mohiniyattam* unlike the usual trends happening in the field.²⁰⁹ She starts her training with bodily exercises that prolongs more classes until the taker's body get tuned with the movement culture of the art form. According to her, a problem that exists among most of the novices of today is the posture of their body. A curved shoulder is the major problem with the fresher's body. And correcting the posture itself is a time demanding task for the teacher. She then introduces *Sruti* and *Thala* to the students. She gives initial foot work practice for her fresh students with the accompaniment of *Sruti*. And for maintaining the breathing patterns she insists her students to render the mnemonic syllables while practicing the foot work.

Pedagogic approach of *Mohiniyattam*: Observations

Mariya Fay writes in *Mind over Body* (1997) that;

“Depending on our own differing personalities, age and sex, the strictness of our demand will manifest itself in various forms. Some of us will keep a distance from our pupils while others will build up a very close and friendly relationship with them. One teacher may use humour while another may be sarcastic. Some may relate to students as an older member of a good partnership while some of us may act as a fair judge.”²¹⁰

Even though she wrote this in the backdrop of dance teaching of the western world, it is also similar to the setting of traditional dance teaching methodology of India. The approaches of above said offshoots sound the same. Some of them stem from a fear-free atmosphere of dance learning and hence they implement a similar methodology upon their pupils. For instance, they will not allow their students to depend on them to some extent. While the other teachers who have thoroughly rooted their practice in the traditional method of dance training, treat their pupils in such a strict manner. Most of the today's generation teachers follow a friendly and fear free

²⁰⁹ Often it is seen that many practioners teach different genres of performance simultaneously to the same students. Not all students and teachers could achieve this task accurately.

²¹⁰ Fay, Maria. (1997). *Mind Over Body: The Development of the Dancer - the Role of the Teacher* (Ballet, Dance, Opera and Music).

method of teaching. They keep relations with the students more comfortable and friendly. However, to an extent, it could affect the quality and productivity of teaching the craft. Again, taking an example of Fay's writing: '*Cruel to be kind*' which is an idiom that indicates the strictness of the teachers in dance practice room in this context. From Pattikaamthoti Ravunnimenon Asan to today's traditional dance teachers, this idiom has prime importance. It is appropriate to examine the words of Kalamandalam Raman Kutty Nair Asan (renowned Kathakali mastreo) regarding the characteristics of learning under the system of *Gurukula Sampradayam*. "There was no particular time assigned for training. Classes were always on, whenever our Asan (teacher) wishes. We got leisure time only during his morning shower and tea time." he says (Ramankutty Nair, 1992). This shows how serious were the approaches which were followed by the traditional gurus of yore. 'The cruel to be kind' approach has been diluted to some extent in the current scenario where 'the gurus' hardly found and teachers exist.²¹¹ Innovations are necessary for an art form to grow or survive in such a fast-paced society. But these innovations are not meant to break some one's right to learn the authentic craft. For instance; some teachers of today who are from the hybridised tradition of practice, implement the same hybridized form that they have learnt from their gurus (whose creative models are up to the explorative kind according to Bodden). This implementation of a hybridised or restructured craft could turn as a barrier for the learner to become a successful dancer. Because the reconstructed pattern could not always match up with the student's body characteristics. The respective pattern might have emerged according to someone else's bodily characteristics and movement-possibilities. The above case studies bring forth the transformational model of creativity which has been applied in the guild of individual teachers of *Mohiniyattam*. Many of the above discussed offshoots of *Mohiniyattam* have the back ground of learning different genres of dance forms such as *Bharathanatyam*, *Kuchipudi*, *Kathakali*, *Thiruvathira*, *yoga*, *Kalaripayattu* and so on. These body knowledge systems could have left their imprints in their experimentations on *Mohiniyattam*. This is according to Bodden²¹² the explorative model of creativity. The form is moulded into some new contexts by incorporating the ideas of other artistic forms.

²¹¹ See the cover page of 'the Attendance' 2016-17 'Gurus v/s Teachers' in this regard. <http://www.attendance-india.com/images/AttendanceCover2017.jpg>

²¹² Bodden, A Margaret. (2004). *The creative mind myths and mechanisms*. (Second Ed.). London: Routledge.

The above observations lead one to probe into the nuances of this practice which can reveal some of the specific qualities of the teaching–learning contexts which moulded the performance styles.

Stylistic Characteristics, Innovations and Contradictions

A *Bani* is a term often used by the practitioners referring to the stylistic aspects which always dominated in a synthesis of tradition and innovation. When the individual dancers attained prominence in the system they always conceived and constructed their own *Bani* as their identity in the realm of performance. “A *Bani* is the result of a creative process where a mind is engaged in reconstructing an art discipline to a certain aesthetic elevation by breaking the existing norms akin to a system practiced” (Neena Prasad, 2012). This itself shows how important is the role of *bani* in the study of *Mohiniyattam*. Multifarious stylistic differentiations could be seen in the *Mohiniyattam* performance arena today. Of course, it is not just the scenario of the times, but of the yore too. It is said that, *Mohiniyattam* was once prevalent in twelve different formats around the river of *Nila* (Vinitha Nedungadi, 2016). However, these traditions and practices are not prevalent now.²¹³

Mohiniyattam under institutional-civilization can be split into two different streams. It was established during 1950s and 60s. Former is the Kalyanikuttiyanamma style which had been formed and entrenched by Kalamandalam Kalyanikuttiyanamma from the early tutorials of Kalamozhi Krishna Menon and Krishna Panicker and the latter constitutes the *Kalamandalam* style enriched by Thottassery Chinnammamma and Kalamandalam Sathyabhama inherited from Krishna Panicker Asan. These two schools are significant in the growth of *Mohiniyattam* style and pedagogy in Kerala. Profuse number of teachers and artistes of *Mohiniyattam* still bring out the legacy of these styles traditionally and sometimes in a hybridized manner. The other two well established styles are the non-native, yet in their expression, they are being the epitome of the native culture of the form which points to Kanak Rele and Bharathi Shivaji styles.

In pursuing traditions there are different trends and modes involved. Some teachers are strict followers of the methodology of their respective gurus. Some teachers are groomed under two or more different schools and they reproduce it as an

²¹³No other references related to the said claim by the dancer is available. But a popular belief on the existence of various practices are prevalent in different regions.

amalgam or with unique expressions. Some are groomed not under any individual style but by their own capacity. Finally, some are visibly distinct in styles, even after trained under the previously established styles. These matters are purely based on the individual interest of choosing, discarding and constructing the values. When a performer starts seeking a new style, it is largely then she faces an inadequacy in the vocabulary of the form. Text, context, body and spectator are the crux-points in this development. A good example in this regard is Vinitha Nedungadi's individual expression of *Mohiniyattam*. She handles the art form with a scientific-mindset. The doing-again-oscitancy is not there in her repertoire. She advances with new productions in an all-new mode. The four wider aspects of the performance (*Caturvidhabhinaya*) change contextually in her attempts. It was a revolutionary attempt when she took *Poothapaattu*, a folk tale for the first time to a classicalised, proscenium setting of *Mohiniyattam*. She modified the Aharyam of *Mohiniyattam* with Pajama-wear attached to it. For her concepts of *Mazha* (*Varshamohini*) and *Puzha* (River) she removed the accompanists entirely. Even though it is beyond-borders for the traditionalists, it is apt when changes are contextual.

The oldest video of *Mohiniyattam* available today is of the movie *Nirmalyam* directed by M T Vasudevan Nair in 1973. There is a *Mohiniyattam* recital towards the end part of the movie, which is a *Padam*, '*Panimathi Mughibaale*' enacted by Kalamandalam Saraswathy and Kalamandalam Leelaamma. That rendition could be viewed as the prefatory structure of Kalamandalam school of *Mohiniyattam*. From there to the present, tremendous changes occurred in the approach, technique and practice of dancing yet the frame is still the same with the Kalamandalam School. This aspect is indeed an intimation of the credibility of that school of practice.

There were unwritten, but spoken rules for *Mohiniyattam* which is still being often followed and broken by dancers. One such thing is related to the *Rasabhinaya*. It is about the intake of *Rasas*. Dominance of *Roudra* and *Veera rasas* in the repertoire was not allowed in the traditional system of *Mohiniyattam*. This taboo was broken by Kalamandalam Kshemavathi and Kalamandalam Leelamma initially and their trailblazing attempts opened new avenues to the followers of *Mohiniyattam*. Even though the research-oriented approaches in *Mohiniyattam* was progressing through many vetrans, Neena Prasad was the first south Indian dancer to take PhD in the discipline of dance. Through conceptual choreographies and re-cultured techniques, she enriched the form. Her style is an amalgam of Kalamandalam and

Kalyanikuttiyamma Schools. She chiselled out the techniques of *Mohiniyattam* through her research on *Lasya* aspects of the dance. She stresses more on the inner-swaying (*Ullil Ninnulla Ulachilukal*) movements of *Mohiniyattam*.

Natanakaishiki is a peculiar style in *Mohiniyattam* that sprung out of the artistic competence of Nirmala Panikker. Influence of the other native-feminine art forms is clearly evident in this style. She revitalised and popularised the regional downtrodden aspects of *Mohiniyattam* such as *Easal*, *Poli*, *Kurathy* and *Chandanam*. Different elements of Mother-Goddess worship in Kerala are embodied in these *Desi* forms. Facial and bodily expressions in her style deserve a special mention since they grew from the traditions of the Sanskrit theatre of Kerala.

The recent, considerably liberated style that is observed in *Mohiniyattam* is of Methil Devika. Her style travels out beyond the mundane body concepts (gender-ideology) of the form. Both her *Abhinaya* and movement patterns have the liberated attitude which marks selfdom in her style.

Established schools of practice in *Mohiniyattam* are undoubtedly the four styles: Kalamandalam, Kalyanikuttiyamma, Kanak Rele and Bharathi Shivaji.²¹⁴ Techniques of these styles often depend and often contradict each other. The basic feet position of *Aramandalam* is being followed in *Kalamandalam* style (four and half angula distance between the feet) which is considered as is a wrong-do in Kalyanikuttiyamma School (two angulas). Followers of Kalyanikuttiyamma School do not encourage the *Konda kettu* or the hairdo which was developed in *Kalamandalam* later in 1960s. They have a strong logical opposition in this matter. Smitha Rajan (Grand-daughter of Kalamandalam Kalyanikuttiyamma) clarifies the concerns about this disapproval quoting her grandmother; “Dance is a kind of *yoga* and in *Yoga Pingala*, *ide* and *Sushumna* nerves of the human body has got significant roles in achieving *Moksha*; the ultimate peace. To represent these nerves a dancer plaits her hair by parting it into three, like three serpents crawling on to each other (like the nerves itself), which starts from the *Mooladhaara*, bottom part of the spinal cord, and reach the *Sahasrapadma* and then when it reaches the *Bhrumadhyarekha* (between the eyebrows) one attains tranquillity” (Smitha Rajan, Interviewed by Anu Chellappa, Jan 23, 2004).

²¹⁴The recognition of these four major schools in *Mohiniyattam* happened after the National level workshop organised by Bharathi Shivaji in Newdelhi in 1990 (SymalaSurendran, 1994:34).

Kalamandalam Sathyabhama used to insist her disciples not to show the teeth out, while smiling during the dance sequences. She allowed only *Smitham* for pure *Nrittam*. However, it has no influence upon the other schools of *Mohiniyattam*. *Kalamandalam* follows an institutional style and hence it stresses upon some formal principles which make the form uncluttered, lucid and un-modified. It has stylistic differentiations with the stages of practice. Individual freedom of the student is strictly opposed in *Kalaries*, till the graduate level in order to sustain the uniformity and validity of the traditional style of practice. This aspect will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. Movement patterns of Bharathi Shivaji and Kanak Rele Schools are different from the native styles. ‘*Ulachil*’ is defined by these two schools in a slightly different way. A *Meyvazhakam* exercise of Bharathi Shivaji is unique in the way it goes on. The swaying patterns of the torso resemble the *Chuzhippu* of *Kathakali* and *Kalaripayattu*. Hands are placed in the *Natyarambha Stana* in front of the pelvic region when the body-lubrication exercises are being executed. This position of the hands helps to control the *Mooladhara* and the lower torso movement as well. Approach of Kanak Rele is more scientific. Executions of circular movements in her school are classified in kinaesthetic measures. Her style reached out to a wider spectrum of *Mohiniyattam* practitioners. It is evident in the present panorama of *Mohiniyattam* practice. The above studies also imply the same because it is observed that many dancers even after learning under one predominant *Bani* turns into the other expression or *bani* of the form. This also indicates the possibility and the trace of hybridity in the performative and pedagogic realm of *Mohiniyattam*. Hybridity also allows one to experiment the form with the explorative model of creativity. Thereby, in the field of *Mohiniyattam*, contradictions and controversies may arise among the traditionalistic, puristic, experimentalistic practitioners of the same. (Refer to the subtitle “Explorations with other style” in the fifth chapter for more details in this regard.)

As an example, the researcher would like to elucidate a single movement which demonstrates the requirement of precision and adherence to tradition in the execution of the particular movement in different schools.

This is a backward movement which appears as the connecting unit of different movement segments of one item. Though it has no resemblance with the Chari definitions of *NatyaSastra*, interestingly it is called as *Charis*, the backward

movements which occur usually in the items of *Mohiniyattam* as inter-loops as observed in the other Indian classical dance traditions. A pictorial idea of the concept is given below in order to understand how the same chari is presented in different schools of *Mohiniyattam*.



Plate no. 4.18 (A student of *Mohiniyattam*, photo captured by the researcher on 16/11/2017 at Hyderabad)

(Movement map: ‘a’ represents a predominant traditional School while ‘b’ is a hybridised style of practice. ‘a’ takes a side to the front movement of the head with no circular movements incorporated in it. While ‘b’ takes a half ‘*Antolika*’ (circular movement) of the head that begins from the right-side-down through right-up-corner and reach towards the front. Thus, the head movement of ‘a’ resembles the shape of ‘7’ and ‘b’ denotes the shape of ‘P’. Other peculiar distinction of these pictures is the wrist position. In the picture ‘a’, the wrist and the palm are kept even. While in the second picture, the palm takes an outward bend.)

This particular example reveals various interesting points regarding the creativity models of *Mohiniyattam*. How did this variation emerge? What provoked the artistes to change the already existing design of the movement? Or what makes them to conform to the existing pattern? In *Kalamandalam* School when the teacher takes lessons on this movement pattern, she would always suggest that “the movement should come as if a *falling of the flower*.”²¹⁵ When the left hand which is placed in front of the chest turns as ‘*Anjali*’ (*Alapadma* of *Abhinaya Darpanam*) the eyes come from the *Alapadma* of the right corner to the front. The movements of the *Hasthas* and *Netra* together make a visual experience of the flower’s fall on the earth.²¹⁶ There circular movement of head and neck is not allowed in this pattern of

²¹⁵ a) Personal experience of the researcher as a student of Kalamandalam.

²¹⁶ A similar concept can be seen in “A Mirror of the Flower” of Zeami Motokiyo. It talks about the acting technique and pedagogy of Noh theatre. “*Flower Mirror, this may be understood to mean ‘a mirror in which an actor may correctly perceive his development as he pursues the flowering of his creativity.’*” (Mark Nearman, 1982).

movement in the school of *Kalamandalam*. While in the other established styles, *Antolika* (circular movement) is involved in this movement which stresses on the *Ulachil* (swaying, one of the predominant movements of *Mohiniyattam* technique) rather the delicacy of the flower.

Geographical Growth of *Mohiniyattam*

The above case studies on the offshoots reveal that *Mohiniyattam* has developed its span all over the regions of Kerala and started blooming outside the state and the country. *Mohiniyattam* was initially prevalent in the regions of Palakkadu and Thrissur. Most of the students and dancers who sought *Mohiniyattam* were from these regions (especially from the central part of Kerala). It was also reflected in the initial intakes of the primary institute of *Mohiniyattam* (*Kalamandalam*). In the course of time its fame spread across various districts of the state and thus students started seeking *Mohiniyattam* from other regions of the state. Individual teachers played major role in developing the span of *Mohiniyattam*'s growth. The individuals attend training from the centre root of *Mohiniyattam* and relocate their artistic and teaching arena to other areas. This triggered the expansion of *Mohiniyattam* into certain regions where the art form was not known before. (Refer to the Milestones of the Growth of *Mohiniyattam* which is represented in the fifth chap) Today *Mohiniyattam* is being sought globally. Offshoots of *Mohiniyattam* has started branching in the domain of foreign soil. They include homegrown, non-native and foreign dancers of *Mohiniyattam*. The *Mohiniyattam* gurus like Tara Raj Kumar, Smitha Rajan, Vijaya Lakshmi, Manjula Murthy and many others successfully run their *Mohiniyattam* institutes abroad. They are energetic in spreading the echoes of *Mohiniyattam* through the global landscapes through well-developed structure of pedagogy, artistic and academic activities such as performance recitals, workshops and lecture demonstrations. It is also noted that, some teachers also engage in the web-teaching of *Mohiniyattam*. Due to the limitation of the impersonal approach and lack of enough data '*Mohiniyattam* pedagogy: abroad' is not explored in the present study.

This observation could be correlated with the native *Mohiniyattam* teachers strategum of movement pedagogy.

Explorations with Other Styles

The case studies of off-shoots unveil a point that most of the practitioners of *Mohiniyattam* are from the background of multifarious dance styles. Whether the focus was given to one form or not, they have been traditionally trained in various styles. This was not a recent trend but the dance pedagogy in Kerala had developed in this manner. During the former days, the teacher taught students many genres of dance without having specialization in any particular genre. Only *Bharathanatyam* was popular as a classical dance form during 1950s in Kerala. Even though semi-folk dances (especially from the movies) were more prevalent in that time. And the teaching of dance used to be fragmented and unclear. This was only due to the lack of a systematised format of dance training. And there were no enough materials to teach any specialised form and moreover, the classicalised format of dancing might not have been introduced in the state during that time. Most of the students who joined *Kalamandalam* in the beginning were from the background of this pattern of learning (Kalamandalam Vimala Menon, Interview, Trivandrum, 14, Oct, 2015; Kalamandalam Sugandi, Kalamassery, 15, Oct, 2015; Kalamandalam Leelamma, Athani, 23, Oct, 2015; Padmanabhan Angadippuram, Angadipuram, 18, May, 2016). The mass also influences one to do multitasking with dance forms. As one teacher comes out of the *Mohiniyattam* institute and starts her own dance institute, the parents automatically prefer her to teach *Bharathanatyam* to their children who joins her institute. This tendency was strongly prevalent in Kerala till the recent times. And this could have been one strong reason for the teachers concentrating on teaching multiple styles of dance at the same time. However, influence of other styles helped *Mohiniyattam* to cultivate a style of its own which is a proved phenomenon, eventhough none of the Gurus would be willing to acknowledge it openly. The combinational models of creativity were always applied by the *Gurus* in making their new choreographies. This could have positively affected *Mohiniyattam* for it would have helped to develop and enhance the performative ideas of the form. But teaching of different genres of dance (eg. *Bharathanatyam*, *Kuchipudi* etc.) to the same students at the same time could be derogatory for the development of the student in one particular genre. Thereby a phenomenon of bleeding borders' of *Mohiniyattam* could occur where, the student gets confused with the construct and the practice of the

form. This will affect the potency and growth of the student as a dancer, trainer and choreographer.

There are many sorts of dancers and practitioners, the so-called purists, traditionalists, experimentalists and teachers who work exclusively for competitions. The teaching manual of a traditional teacher could be strict and inside the box. She might have tried innovations during her years of choreography and presentations. But once she is herself developed as a fulltime teacher, she would not acknowledge the fact that she had been an experimentalist. Because she made all her experimentations into the box and developed a new school of practice. However, her approach could make the student confident in acquiring the craft of the form. Under such a teacher, there is no chance for the student to get confused with many unexplored ideas. The traditional teacher allows the student to think and work the dance on their own only after mastering the craft thoroughly. Today, the situations have changed drastically. “In this generation there is no ‘Gurus’ only teachers” (Ashish Mohan Khokar, 2018). There are no many full-time / committed young teachers in *Mohiniyattam* today. Even one is found, she/he would be concentrating mostly on the commercialising aspects of the dance. For them the essence of the art doesn’t matter, they just transform the form in accordance with the taste of the common-spectators. Commercialisation is also one great reason for selling *Mohiniyattam* on the digital platforms. The two dimensional virtual-teaching got into the scenario of *Mohiniyattam* recently when a lot of admirers of *Mohiniyattam* started approaching the teachers from abroad. However, this phenomenon is much recent and hence no productions and results have been produced yet. Hence, at present, one could only imagine or assume the feasibility of the platform. The findings of the research survey that the researcher has undertaken in connection with the development of institutional pedagogy of *Mohiniyattam* will illuminate one’s understanding of the rear picture of the growth and change of *Mohiniyattam* pedagogy today.

Nuances of Institutional Pedagogy of *Mohiniyattam* Today: Observations

Institutional learning of any art form of the present times has ample importance as opportunities and time are lesser available entities related to the studies of art in the present global scenario. Today, Institution has the only power to reimplement the organic teaching style of art forms among the learners of this digitalised generation. Thus, there are certain areas the institutions of *Mohiniyattam*

(any art form) has to be dealt with carefully. The learner of any age who joins the institution for learning a specific subject is supposed to be a full-time learner of the subject under the institution. If the course is designed for eight years, the students of the institute are liable to take the designed course fully to attain the title of the institute. The title which is (unofficially) given to the student by the institute, however turns as a mark of its productivity and reputation. Thus, any of the lacuna that exists in that product could directly affect the growth and the reputation of the institute.²¹⁷ Physical-art-training-institutions are different from any other sort of educational institutions. In the institutions of art, the art becomes the major focus and also a way of life. This value is observed to be vanishing from the present environment of art institutions.²¹⁸ Besides that, ‘Self correction of movement’, an important aspect of learning dance, is also seen disappearing. In dance learning, mirror-correction is also as important as the strategies like self and mutual-corrections. Equipment like mirrors and digital walls also could be utilised for the enhancement of dance learning. The evaluating system of practicum has to be critically rejuvenated in the institute. Qualities such as attentiveness, interest, and sincerity of students have to be nurtured in the institute by inculcating required strategies into the curriculum of the course. The health and food habits of the students have to be dealt with great importance within the system of a physical art training. The learning, performing and analysing competence of the student is to be nurtured under the ambience of the institute appropriately. Technical support could be used for implementing a transparent learning atmosphere. The web-cams could help monitoring the classes even when the teacher is not available for official reasons. Cam-recording during the hours of practical examinations also help the students assess themselves and correct the mistakes in an appropriate manner. Support of Senior gurus of high potentiality in the field has to be used for correcting the performance bodies of the institute and retaining the quality of the values of the performance technique (Refer to the appendix for the detailed report and analysis of the survey findings).

²¹⁷ From the survey, taken by the researcher at the institute, it is observed that, students are being admitted to the course of the institute at any level regardless of the grades. Thus, not all students are necessarily given eight years’ rigorous course of learning.

²¹⁸ In the institute, the evening practice sessions (at the hostel) are no longer being a strict practice and nobody is usually there to monitor the practice (Taken from the survey report. See the appendix for more details).

Conclusion

This chapter attempted to explore the four major approaches and the role of individuals that had contributed immensely to the growth of *Mohiniyattam* to become a full-fledged dance form as seen today. The first one was an institutionalized effort led by Kalamandalam Sathyabhama with the support and help of scholars and authorities of *Kalamandalam* of that period. It was a crucial phase in the development of the institution. The second one was an individual effort by Kalamandalam Kalyanikuttyamma to carve out her own pedagogy from what she had attained as a student of *Kerala Kalamandalam*. She developed a new pedagogy of her own through ample research and practice.

The third and fourth approaches constitute the concerted efforts of two non-keralites to revive the art form. Kanak Rele from Mumbai and Bharathi Shivaji from Delhi tried to bring forth a scientific and novel outlook to the pedagogic approach of *Mohiniyattam*. They could successfully rejuvenate the entire aspects of *Caturvidhabhinaya* in *Mohiniyattam*.

The second part mapped out the growth of *Mohiniyattam* pedagogy through the offshoots of Major *Mohiniyattam* schools. It discussed the nuances of different pedagogic approaches and stylistic variations of *Mohiniyattam* in brief. It also discussed the geographical growth of the pedagogy and practice of the art form. The chapter concluded with the observations of the survey report and analysis of the nuances of institutional pedagogy of *Mohiniyattam* today. Next chapter will enunciate different aspects of the performativity of the art form analysing them through various critical dimensions.

CHAPTER 5

MOHINIYATTAM TECHNIQUE: BODY, MOVEMENT, IMAGE AND SCRUTINY OF PEDAGOGICAL GROWTH

Mohiniyattam is essentially an ‘Attam’ which manifests the subtle and delicate movements of the body. The slow-pace coupled with gentleness constitute the core character of Attam of the Mohini. The nuances and intricacies involved in its technique are worth interrogation. It is an acknowledged fact that slow pace demands keen attention and is more complex in any domain of physical performance. *Mohiniyattam*, in particular, intensifies the languorous character of movements. This may be highlighted as the greatest quality and at the same time, the complexity of the form. The present chapter illustrates the essential features and intricacies of *Mohiniyattam*, in an attempt to focus on the texture of its movement culture.

A brief Account on Mohiniyattam Technique

*“Ilamkaatilulanjidumpinchunelchedipolave
Mruduvayivaranamdehachalanamnarthakikkaye”*

(“The dancer’s body movements should resemble that of the baby ears of paddy, which oscillates, attuned to the soft touch of breeze.”)²¹⁹ (Kalyanikuttiyamma, 1992).

The above said lines precisely reveal the core idea of the movement in *Mohiniyattam* dance. The word, ‘Ulanjidum’ mentioned here (the corresponding lexical form of the word is ‘Ulachil’; Swinging), is the purest essence of *Mohiniyattam* regardless of any ilk or school. This action is manifested through the movements of the upper-torso and arms. In the movement of *Mohiniyattam*, the body draws circles (*Vruthangal*) of different measures- quarter, half, three-quarters and full. The precise execution of *Ulachil* is determined by the synchronization of *Madakkukal* and *Vruthangal*. *Madakkukal* are the folds of arms in different measures: ‘*Kaalmadaku* (*Quarter*), *Ara Madakku* (*half*), *MukkalMadakku* (*three-quarters*) and *Muzhu Madakku* (*full*).’²²⁰

The researcher intends to introduce the peculiar facets of *Mohiniyattam* technique rather than mapping the entire vocabulary of the form. The distinct features of the techniques which are exclusive to *Mohiniyattam* are introduced as follows.

²¹⁹ Translated by the researcher.

²²⁰ From different sources of participant observations of the researcher.

(This analytical study on *Mohiniyattam* technique has been developed by the researcher from her own involvement in the field as a participant of the cultural practice.)

'Vaayukramikarikkal', an auxiliary technique of *'Ulachil'* is a process of controlling the air flow of body. The major part involved in this act is the central region (diaphragm), which is located between the torso and the waist. Pulling and pushing of energy to different parts is certainly important in the bodily movements of *Mohiniyattam*. This pulling and pushing of energy is regulated through the breathing technique that is naturally employed in the pattern of movement in *Mohiniyattam*. This aspect is central to the traditional performing arts of Kerala and basically, this energy-traverse technique is attributed to the martial art form, *Kalaripayattu*. Today, many of the dancers consciously employ the techniques of this martial art in their experimentations in *Mohiniyattam*. However, visibly or non-visibly, the presence of *Kalaripayattu* is identifiable in the stem idea of *Mohiniyattam*. (For more details on the same refer to “explorations with other styles” in the previous chapter)

Paadachalanam (foot work) or *Paadapathanam* (foot fall) is a prominent feature of *Mohiniyattam* dance technique. It refers to the style of foot work in *Mohiniyattam*. The conventional foot work in *Mohiniyattam* is delicate and soft. Though not many are practising it now, making high flown foot-fall is a taboo in the traditional rendition of *Mohiniyattam*. (The reason behind the taboo in the traditional approach of *Mohiniyattam*, has been discussed in detail in this chapter under the title Movement Politics and *Mohiniyattam*).

'Thazhnnirikkal' is a term that is often repeated in the practice room, which means nothing but *'Aramandala'*. In *Kalamandalam* School the distance between the feet is four and half *Angulas* whereas in *Kalyanikuttyamma* School it is two *Angulas*²²¹. From this posture, the movement of *Mohiniyattam* is set in motion. In order to achieve good command over rhythm and body balance, students are supposed to remain in this position thoroughly and practice *Kaal Sadhakam* before switching to any numbers.²²²

The intricacy and placidness of *Mohiniyattam* dance technique are perceptible in the languidness (slow-pace) of the art form. Allied performing traditions of

²²¹ A finger's breadth. It is approximately equal to 1.763 centimetres.

²²² It is also adapted as a punishment for the students. For instance, when the student breaks the rule of the institution, the teachers make them to sit in *Aramandala* posture for long hours like morning to evening. (information collected from the participation observation of the researcher)

Mohiniyattam (*Kathakali*, *Nangiarkoothu*, *Koodiyattam*) also illustrate this character. Languidness is the beauty which provides the keen performer a significant opportunity to polish the recital in every aspect of *Caturvidhabhinaya*. Thus, the soothing slowness is undeniably inevitable in *Mohiniyattam*.

Why does *Mohiniyattam* have the characteristic languidness? *Mohiniyattam* could be called as an ‘*Ayana*’ (A journey). “The technique of *Mohiniyattam* stresses not upon the destinations (goal postures) but on the process of reaching the destinations” (Vijayalakshmi, Oct, 2016). A learner of *Mohiniyattam* has to adequately comprehend the internal-*Ulachilukal* (internal waves) in order to assure an inward-spiritual-journey through *Mohiniyattam*.

The age of Swathi Thirunal, witnessed the introduction of *Hashtalakshanadeepika* into the realm of *Mohiniyattam*. The text deals with 24 mudras from *Pathaka Hastha* to *Katakamugham*. (Refer to appendix no.4 for the pictures) Even though *Mohiniyattam* adapts the gestures of different treatises and cultures, *Gramya Mudras* are more prevalent in its form. *Gramya mudras* are derived directly from the native gestures of human communication, which allow *Mohiniyattam* to be more audience friendly. ‘*Mughajabhinaya*’ of *Mohiniyattam* is more intricate and tuneful.²²³ In most of the schools of *Mohiniyattam*, facial expressions get matured from the allied classical art forms which give prime importance to *Mughajabhinaya*. It is a collective quality of the Sanskritized performing art traditions of Kerala. They are traditionally performed in a closed setting for a closed group of audience in a small *Koothambalam* in front of the lit oil lamps. Because of the limitation of performance space and proximity of the audience, more sophistication is required in the facial expressions and mode of singing (it is also highly sophisticated and of low-volume). The singing style bears the imprint of the Vedic chanting tradition of Kerala. All these qualities are manifested in *Mohiniyattam* today.

Musicality is another signature aspect of the *Mohiniyattam* technique. Musicality of *Mohiniyattam* movements emerges out of inner and outer bodily expressions (*Akam- Pura Ulachilukal*). *Mohiniyattam* gives much freedom in time for expressing the complete possibilities of *Abhinaya* and *Nritta*. In this way, music gains

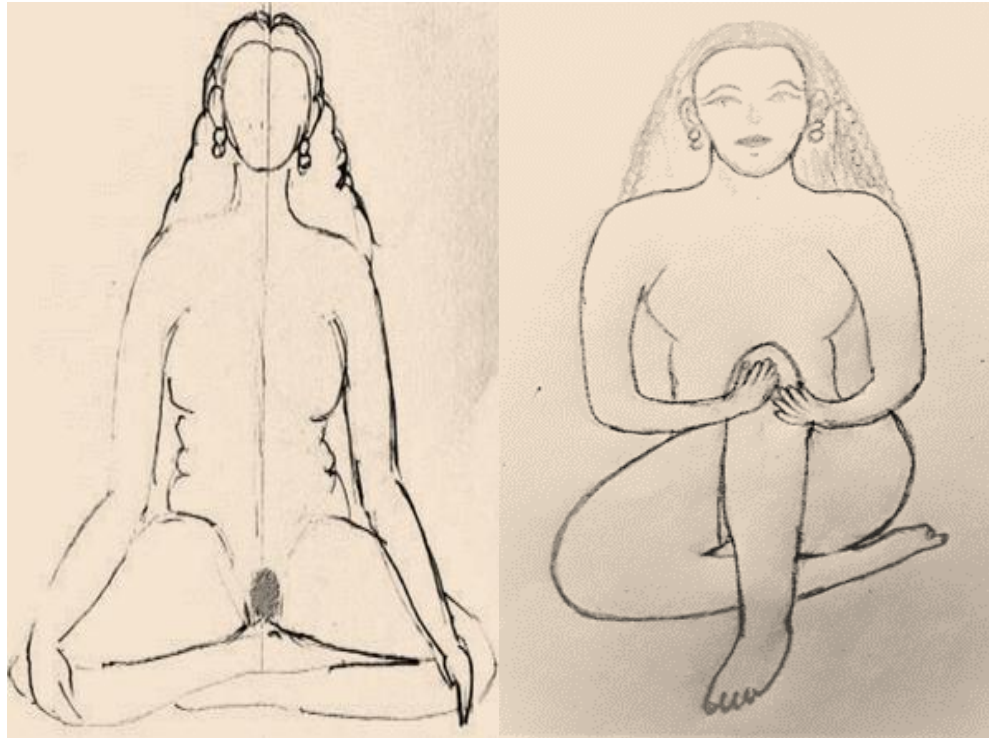
²²³ The detailed execution of *Mughajabhinaya* which is akin to the tradition of *Nangiar Koothu*, brought in the performativity of *Mohiniyattam* by Nirmala Panikker and Venu G. This aspect is one of the characteristics of blooming style of *Natana Kaishiki*.

visibility through the dancer's body. The movement patterns of this form emerge from the experimentations of cultural adaptation and exploration. Being the embodiment of the true essence of native culture and not an adapted version, the root idea of the movements remains the same.

Movement-Analysis of *Mohiniyattam* Based on its Cultural Backdrop

Movements of *Mohiniyattam* have been evolved and nurtured in tune with the essence of its native culture. Mind-set of the people of the land, and the way and etiquette of their social life reflect in the development of these movements. Different elements of human-life are incorporated in these movement patterns. Moreover, these elements are closer to the purpose and performance of the art form. Eroticism is still mildly on wave in most of the movement patterns of *Mohiniyattam*. Submissiveness and obedience are the other qualities that are embedded in the movements of *Mohiniyattam*. According to many dancers, closing of each movement of *Mohiniyattam* seems to reach the highest end of spirituality. While the former qualities mentioned earlier are attributed to the age of feudalism, the latter part is drawn from the philosophy of *Bhakti Movement*.

'*ChamramPadinjirikkal*' is a disciplined way of sitting that has been taught to the children of Kerala mandatory as a part of practicing good manners. In this manner of sitting, thighs are wide opened, not to keep the pelvic region closed. This could be contradictory to the practices followed in other parts of South India. Woman sitting with the thighs (pelvic region) closed is only regarded as the ideal manner in such contexts. In those societies, *Chamram Padinjirikkal* could be a wrong practice for a woman of good character (family woman/ domesticated woman). The pictorial representation of the respective postures is given below:



Plates 5.1 and 5.2

[Plate 5.1: This sitting posture is called ‘ChamramPadinjirikkal’. It is the decent way of sitting on the floor practiced by the people of Kerala. In this posture, the pelvic area is kept opened. (Sketched by the researcher).]

[Plate 5.2: Sitting posture with the legs crossed, usually practised by the women of South India except Kerala. In this posture, the pelvic area is closed (Sketched by the researcher).]

Mohiniyattam stance (*Vaishnava*) is much akin to the posture of ‘*ChamramPadiyal*’. The pelvic region is almost always kept open. Kalyanikuttiyamma’s point in this regard is noteworthy. She wrote (1999); “*Tiruvattiraw* was traditionally performed by noble women but they did not perform *Mohiniyattam* at all” (p.26). It indicates the state of value of *Mohiniyattam* during that age. It must be noted that there are severe but not easily identifiable differences in the movement patterns of these forms. On closer inspection of these slight differences, the inner idea of Kalyanikuttiyamma’s words (above said) could be understood (The pictorial idea of the same is given below).



Plates 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5

[Plate 5.3: A movement pattern of *Thiruvathira* where the legs are kept crossed. Pelvic area also closed. Sketched by the researcher.]

[Plate 5.4: A movement pattern of *Thiruvathira*. The legs are not kept much apart. Thighs are restricted to open out. Sketched by the researcher.]

[Plate 5.5: *Aramandala* (basic posture) of *Mohiniyattam*. Thighs and pelvic area are kept in an open-out position. Sketched by the researcher.]

The body of woman is characterised by the synchrony of many circular and semi-circular shapes. ‘*Varthula Chalanam*’ of *Mohiniyattam* is undoubtedly the manifestation of this core essence of womanliness. “Dance movement has two faces like that of a coin, on one side it can be that much spiritual and on the other side it can go down to a vulgar state in turn” (Kalamandalam Leelamma, interview, Athani, March, 2016). If this movement (*Varthulachalanam*) is executed not in the erotic means, it embodies the quality of spirituality. As observed in the traditions of *Sufism* and *Buddhism*, where repetitions of circular movements evoke spiritual enlightenment, the circular, slow-paced movements of *Mohiniyattam* could also be meditational and hence, spiritual.

As mentioned earlier, *Kalari* training was indirectly influential in shaping the flexibility of the performers’ body. Other techniques like Yoga came in as a part of training the body in the case of some individual performers. The meditational character of Yoga is also deep-rooted in certain movement patterns of *Mohiniyattam*.

Mohiniyattam and Yoga

Visible and invisible vibes of yoga are identifiable in any form of dance as the concept of body and mind is intimately bound up with this meditational form of art. Classical dance is a beautified sport which takes the body and mind of the dancer to a certain point of concentration. Yoga is nothing but a practice which elevates a being into concentration or contemplation. The repetition of watching (action of spectator) or performing (action of performer) eventually becomes a meditation.²²⁴ Everything in this world that reoccur and replicate in the path of time is cyclic (even the mother earth moves in *Varthulam* (cyclic) and *Bhramanam* (circular)).

The *Chalana* (movement) of *Mohiniyattam* is *Varthulam*. There is a central median in the performer's body, known as solar plexus to mature and regulate the bodily movement as a whole. This mechanism gives scope for various philosophical interpretations. The entire body of the dancer represents mother-earth and the *Varthula* movements of the body symbolises the *Pradikshana* (revolution) and *Swayam Bhramana* (rotation) of the earth on its axis.²²⁵ From a religious perspective, it may be viewed that these *Varthula* movements of the body depict the *Prathakshina* of a devotee around the temple sanctorum and the *Vigraha* (meditating image) is enrooted in the solar plexus (*Moola-adharachakra*) of the body. Breathing technique (*Vayu Niyamtranam*) of *Mohiniyattam* (also observed in the other traditional performing arts of Kerala, especially in *Kalaripayattu*, a martial art form of Kerala) is much akin to the *Praanayaama* (understanding the life force) technique in Yoga. 'Vayu Niyamtranam', is how it's sounded in the lingo of *Mohiniyattam*. Different patterns of rhythmic breathing are applied in the slow-pitch movements of *Mohiniyattam*. The spatial measures and designs of swaying movements follow different paces in breathing. This tempo and accuracy of breathing regulate the movement as a whole. Eventually, all these accurately-maintained-body-actions elevate the performer to a state of bliss. Both in Yoga and dance, the steps involved in the personal growth are *Sadhana* (practice)- *Ekagratha* (concentration)- *Layana* (deep involvement) – and *Ananda* (spiritual freedom/ a state of thoughtlessness). Recently,

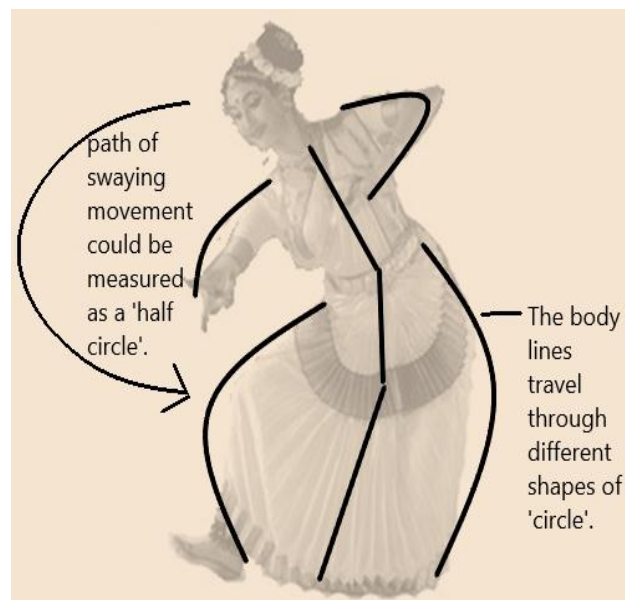
²²⁴ A prime example for meditational dancing in India is the dance of the Sufi.

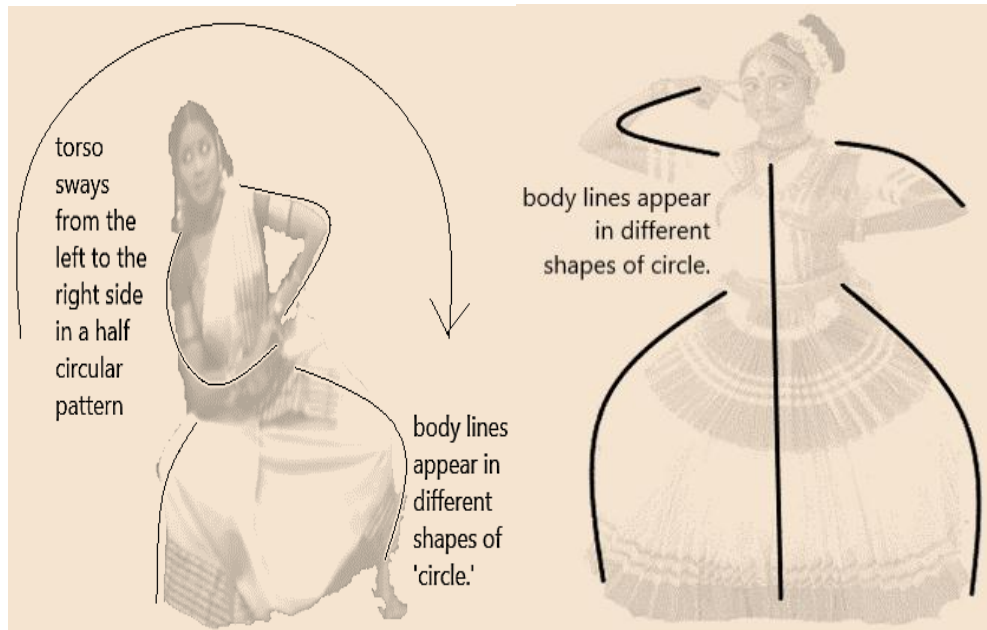
²²⁵ Gurus and scholars like Kanak Rele and Bharathi Shivaji conceptualise that the entire dance movements of *Mohiniyattam* emerges from the pelvic regions. They have adapted this concept into their performative and literary works. Bharathi Shivaji also observes that the circular movements of *Mohiniyattam* has some underlying connections with the round shape of the temple architecture of Kerala.

many institutions encourage their students to practice yoga along with the training in *Mohiniyattam*, as it has helped a lot of performers to perform better. An investigation of the possibilities of Yoga and appropriate practice of the same will enhance the preservation of *Mohiniyattam* tradition to a great extent. In reality many of the circular movements of *Mohiniyattam* and its training practices unconsciously employ the Yogic idea of *Chakra*.

Geometry of *Mohiniyattam* Movements and Spirituality

Before delving into the nuances of spirituality in *Mohiniyattam* movements, one has to understand the intricacies of the character of *Mohiniyattam* movements. “All the traditional art forms have a systematised pattern of movements which are usually in the shapes of geometry. As every action and movement is patterned out of certain measurements” (Rajan, 2019). These geometrical patterns give individuality and character to the movement culture of systematised/ patterned forms of performance art. Among the geometrical shapes, circle and allied shapes of circle have gained prominence in *Mohiniyattam* movements. Moreover, this circular pattern of movements grants uniqueness to the kinaesthesia of *Mohiniyattam*. Some of the movements are illustrated below:





Plates 5.6, 5.7 and 5.8

[Plate 5.6: The body lines which appear in different shapes of circle as quarter circle, half circle and full circle. In this picture, the torso is moving from the heart area towards the right side through the upper side in a half circular pattern.]

[Plate 5.7: A swaying movement pattern. Torso moves from left towards right in a half circular pattern.]

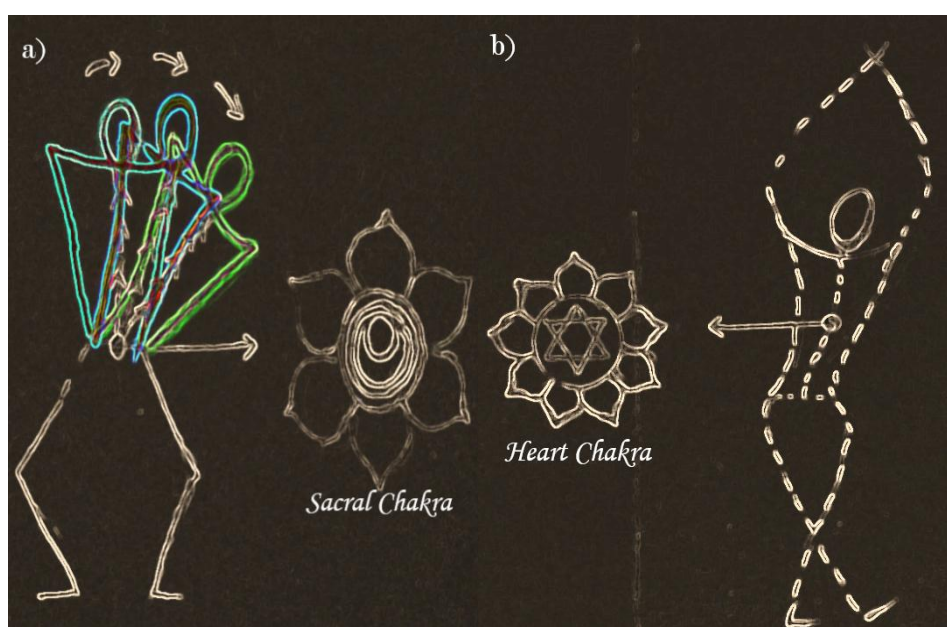
[Plate 5.8: A straight position of *Aramandala*, yet body lines are there to reflex the circular pattern.]

‘Circle’ is a fatal part in the development of human life, both biological and ethereal. In the oriental concept of human body (especially in Jainism, Buddhism and Hinduism), there are five to seven crucial chakras to regulate the whole energy of life. Energy is termed in this context as *Prana* and circles/ cycles as Chakras (the source point of energy). *Muladhara* (Base of spine/ Coccygeal Plexus), *Svatisthana* (Lower Abdomen/ Sacral Plexus), *Manipura* (Solar Plexus), *Anahata* (Chest/Heart/Cardiac Plexus), *Visuddha* (Throat/ Pharyngeal Plexus), *Ajna* (Forehead/ Carotid Plexus), and *Sahasrara* (Cerebral Cortex) are the seven major sources of life energies. Chakras move in circular motion. The circular and spinning motion of chakras evokes *Prana* and generates life-energy. Over ninety percentage of humans’ life –energy gets evoked only at the level of root chakra (*Muladhara*) due to lack of practice. The continual activity of human life-energy is the state of being charged and discharged. Circular motion has two different modes- clock-wise and anti-clockwise. Clock wise circular movement is to absorb/ tight /fill the energy, while the anti-clockwise movement helps to release / discharge the energy. The following paragraph elaborates on the concept of chakra in *Mohiniyattam*.

In the present context, the most apprehensible form that touches upon the concept of chakra would be *Thumpi Thullal*. *Thumpi Thullal* is a ritualistic art form performed by women of Kerala. It begins with a slow wavy, clockwise- circular movement (which can be *Aravrittam*) that progresses into further paces and finally at the crescendo, the fast-paced movement would be performed anti-clockwise. In the beginning part, the performer concentrates/ tights her energy and in the end part she releases it. Certainly, movements of *Mohiniyattam* evoke these energy-sources at different levels of body motions. Spine is the pivotal area to produce and control these energy movements. Spinal column has three curves (Cervical, Thoracic and lumbar) which gives it a slight 'S' shape. "Out of 33 bones of vertebrae, 24 are mobile which allow the spine can make six types of movements: up, down, right side-up, left side-up, right side-down and left side-down" (Dr Kishore Raj, Interview, Palluruthy, 17, December, 2018). Each of these bones is connected to the nerves, enabling these bones regulate a wide area. (For instance; In *Marma* therapy, touching the cervical bone can relieve the sprain of lower legs.) Different patterns of spinal movements touch different areas of bones and eventually, it arouses the connected chakra. Peripherally one may find the up and down chest movement of *Mohiyattam*, erotic, but to some extent it is submissive. For a viewer it is hard to find these gradations of movement. The researcher experimented this specific movement pattern under the supervision of a renowned *Marma therapist* and Homeo- Physician, Dr. Kishore Raj, Ernakulam and it was very productive.²²⁶ Researcher was asked to perform this pattern of movement in a nuanced manner. Further she was asked to feel the root of the energy of the movement. At first the researcher felt her naval as the originating point of energy. Therapist asked her to concentrate on the movement and repeat the task. The researcher suddenly reminded her teachers' words while checking and confirming the root of energy. Traditional dance teachers used to stress on a specific term, known as '*Vayu Niyantanam*' 'control of air' or control of prana/energy quite often in the class room. Whenever this up and down chest movement (*Munnottulla Ulachil*) comes to the fore, teachers used to say: "*Araykku Vayu Koduthu Cheyyu*" ("Do the movement with sustaining air at the lower-abdomen."). This movement emerges from the abdomen part of body and moves through Lumbar, Thoracic and Cervical spine bones and the back. Thus, it touches and evokes the chakra of

²²⁶ Experimentation on '*Mohiniyattam* body movements and *Chakra*' conducted by the researcher and *Marma* Therapist and Physician Dr. Kishore Raj, Ernakulam on the dates 15,16,17 of December 2018.

Svadhithana (Sacral). Sacral chakra is the source of sexual energy. Thus, it is also known as Sex-Chakra. One could also relate it to the practice of *Lasya Tantra* (Refer to the details in the second chapter under the subtitle, Perspectives of the textual references). This movement pattern is comparable to the movement of horse-riding. The movement of spine is apparently similar in both these movement varieties. *Mohiniyattam* has many varieties of wavy movements of upper torso therefore vertebral column is always engaged in switching to its six kinds of movements. In the same way, many movements of *Mohiniyattam* could be connected to the actions of various chakras by analysing the consumption of energy in those movements. For instance,



Plates 5.9 and 5.10 (developed by the researcher)

- a) The movement pattern is 'Ulachil'. The movement stems from the pelvic area of human body (Sacral Chakra) and is regulated through the solar plexus chakra (located above the navel)
- b) The movement pattern is 'Charivu'. The movement stresses on the sacral and heart chakras (heart area). During the take of this movement, the whole body is balanced on this point.

The importance of the use of body and its graceful movements along with its maintenance is an aspect that is given utmost priority in the *Mohiniyattam* training system. As the complete embodiment of the performance has been centred on the life

and anatomy of womanhood, it is also probable that *Mohiniyattam* had had an existence in the cult of *Shaktism*.²²⁷

***Mohiniyattam* Performativity and *Bhagavathi* (Shakti)-Cult**

The primeval phase of *Mohiniyattam* could have been a far cry from the concept and thought of the present-day *Mohiniyattam*. The women-lives of ancient India, prior to the Aryan migrations were apparently free from the male dominant ideas of the contemporary society. The female dancing traditions of the Dravidian age could have been much intrepid and woman centric than today's postulation of the *Mohini*. It is from the indigenous people of the land²²⁸ that the concept of mother-goddess-worship had originated. Basham Arthur defines the mother-goddess-worship of India as: "The theme of shakti perhaps grew out of a conflict and eventual compromise between a powerful matriarchal culture that existed in India before the Aryan migrations (2500, B.C. [B.C.E.]) and the male-dominated society of the Aryans" (as cited in asiasociety.org, para.1).²²⁹ There are ample inferences to substantiate the relationship of *Mohiniyattam* with the aboriginal cults of *Shakti/ Kali* worship. 'Achi Kooth', a form of *Bhagavathi* worship is believed to have influenced the performativity of *Mohiniyattam*. 'Achi Kooth' literally implies 'dance of woman'. The dancer of *Achi Kooth* portrays designs and figures on the floor through her body movements and foot work using the five natural colours (S K Vasanthan, Interview, 23, Dec, 2018). This could be traced from the ritualistic models of *Kali/ Bhagavathi* worship of the land such as *KalamezhuthuPattu*. The *Cholkettu* that starts by praising the mother goddess in verses, symbolises nothing but this ancient form of *Bhagavathi* cult. All these characteristics are no longer seen in the performativity of the art form. The fact behind the disappearance of these traditions

²²⁷ Bharathi Shivaji and many others reinvented and brought the essence of the native worship cult of *Shaktism* into performative realm of *Mohiniyattam*. *Niram* in the *Sopanam* repertoire of *Mohiniyattam* is an example in this regard. The desi number 'Poli' also has essence of native Shakti cult. *Poli* is revived and attached into the repertoire by Nirmala Panikkar.

²²⁸ Dravidians.

²²⁹ Arthur Bashom (1967) wrote: "The Mother Goddess of the Indus Valley people never really gave place to a dominant male. The Earth Mother continues to be worshipped in India as the power that nurtures the seed and brings it to fruition. This basic reverence of an agricultural people affirms that man is really dependent on woman for she gives life, food and strength" as Cited in Johnson, Jean. *Shakti: The power of the Feminine*. Asia Society: Centre for Global Education.

could be the political and conjectural pressures of the society which still instigates the art form to undergo changes both positively and negatively time to time.

Etymology of Characteristic *Mohiniyattam Adavus*: A cultural Perspective

There are varied gestures and movement-expressions of primitive men that still persists in the performative and communicative language of the present-day human life. Among such movements that survived through the ages of human life, open and close pattern of palm movement has got great significance. The Third *Pirivu (Tirmana)* of *Mohiniyattam* has that sort of nature. In this movement pattern, the palms move, open and close one after the other in accordance with the rhythm. The same gesture is seen in many expressions of art genres such as tribal, folk, urban and so on. It could be read as a primitive sign of communication that survived through several ages. In this movement of palms, more than on any other parts, the stress comes onto the wrists. Thus, for some scholars, this sort of movement was emerged in days of yore as part of human concerns of health and fitness (Kadangot, 20, December, 2018). Fourth *Pirivu (Tirmana)* of *Mohiniyattam*, “*Dhititai*” is a pure adaptation of a regional movement pattern, *Kummi Adavu*. These patterns might have been appropriated by *Mohiniyattam* as part of its *nobilization*.²³⁰ This *Kummi* variation originated from the usual kitchen activity of rice-pounding. This is a day to day activity of a homely woman. Hence there is no conjecture about the existence of such movement in *Thiruvathira Kali*.²³¹ The drawings below elucidate the evolution of a particular movement through various cultural contexts and practice. The first picture represents the kitchen activity of rice pounding. In this activity, the performer holds an iron-knobbed stick called *Ulakka* to beat the rice on the barrel. After each time of beating, she changes her hand. It must be noted that the movement of her hand would portray a triangular shape in the space. This movement is reflected in the social dancing pattern of domesticated women which is nothing but the *Tiruvathira* dance. There are various movements that had emerged in *Mohiniyattam* in this fashion.

²³⁰ *Nobilization*- changing the nature and forms of already existed cultures according to the taste of dominant/ so called elite (urban) culture.

²³¹ This movement has also resemblance with the movement patterns of *Panthattam*, the dance form which was prevalent during the Sangam era.



Plates 5.11, 5.12 and 5.13

[Plate 5.11: *Nellukuthal*, rice pounding, a kitchen activity. Sketched by the researcher.]

[Plate 5.12: A movement posture of *Thiruvathira*. Sketched by the researcher]

[Plate 5.13: *TirmanaAdavu* (*Pirivu*) of *MohiniyattamAdavus*. Sketched by the researcher]

Now the researcher would like to introduce a different pattern of origin of the *Mohiniyattam* movement in different contexts.

The up and down movement of chest is a peculiar swaying movement pattern (*Ulachil*) in *Mohiniyattam*. This occurs in almost every walking pattern of this dance form. A close inspection of this movement reveals the true picture of its existence. This movement showcases nothing but submissiveness,²³² an imposed behaviour upon women (especially during the feudal era) with a slight presence of eroticism. So is the case with fifth *Adavu*.²³³

Next is an *Adavu* that might have stemmed from the context of entertainment, '*Ettuvaraykkal*' (drawing the eight) which comes as seventh in the order of *Mohiniyattam* *Adavus* (Refer to appendix no. 3G for the pictorial idea of the movement pattern). It reminds us of nothing but the play of '*Unjaal-Attam*' (Swing Dance). This *Adavu* has two segments. First part is going to the front corner where the latter part is taken as the step to return to the back corner. And this 'going back' or the final portion expresses the idea of 'yearning for something'.

²³² As if to show the sign of 'slave I remain'.

²³³ The fifth *Adavu* is beyond doubt an iconic *adavu* of *Mohiniyattam*. Mastering this single piece would take time and patience. And this piece exhibits the total tenderness (character of obedience in particular) of the form. May be the male-dominated idea of 'woman' is being feeded and installed here through this movement.

Despite exploring its cultural, meditational and kinaesthetic qualities in the movement of *Mohiniyattam*, we also need to take into account the other perspectives of the political hegemony and its influence on the movement construct.

Lasya-Tantra and Gender-Trouble

On close inspection of history, it becomes clear that the essential features of *Mohiniyattam* movement itself turns into an archetype of political hegemony of the traditional society of Kerala. Practitioners often criticize the attempts of young artistes for tapping the foot aloud. And they add “a *Mohiniyattam* dancer should not move so brisk and quick, as in our traditional family set-up, women were supposed to walk and speak subtly.”²³⁴ Even though the inward *Ulachil* (swaying movement with the chest going up and down) peripherally marks *Sringara* (eroticism), it could also be interpreted as a trait of the submissive nature of women in the medieval society of Kerala. This cult of *Sringara* (eroticism) in *Mohiniyattam* is evident from the earlier tales of *Lasya tantra*. As stated in the second chapter *Lasya tantra* could be a sophisticated or legalised form of prostitution. The movement patterns and performativity of *Mohiniyattam* itself is a reason for gender-trouble (identity crisis of the gender). It becomes a learned behaviour of femininity, endorsed by the male dominated ideology of the society. The concept of ‘corporeal shaping’ advocated by the well-known educationist, Sherry Shapiro has great significance in this regard. She argues (in the context of general phenomenon of the performing bodies of female): “Knowledge is body-mediated, that all learning is primarily somatic; that the act of knowing is largely a form of corporeal shaping in which women are transformed into objects of display and identity, their image circumscribed and policed by the male gaze”(McLaren, 1999:IX). She addresses “these toned bodies as ‘skinned alive’ inscribed by the productive processes that exploit human lives for economic purposes, violently” (McLaren, 1999: IX). She perceives these bodies as houses of injustices. Even though Shapiro argues from the perspective of a post-modern, and capitalistic

²³⁴ Stated by *Kalamandalam Kalyanikuttyamma*. The same idea is expressed by many teachers. This ideology supports the mind-set of the traditional patriarchal hierarchy.

Does *Mohiniyattam* have a political air? Usually many dancers of *Mohiniyattam* skip or deny this question stating that they do not represent any thought of politics through their dance practice (it is evident from several interviews given by the artistes). Because these dancers do blindly follow a tradition which had once been derived from someone else’s policy of politics. Hence, there is no meaning, denying the role of politics in the art they create. “Nor is it possible to devote oneself to culture and declare that one is ‘not interested’ in politics” (Thomas Mann, Ed.Ruth Nanda Anshen, 2019: Google Books).

world, these observations are also relevant in the shaping of the corporeality of *Mohiniyattam*. Certain movements of *Mohiniyattam* characterise the phenomenon of subjugation and domestication of female bodies.²³⁵ Thus, *Mohiniyattam* movements that uphold these above-mentioned cultural values, isolate the art form from the existing social context.²³⁶ The relevance and importance of this dance form could be rejuvenated, from this state of crystallization, by adding significant themes which are relevant to the contemporary scenario of the society.

Adaptation of different themes and rejuvenation of various aspects like music, costume and peripheral setting (stage setting) could energise and exalt the form to a higher level and could also bring contemporary relevance to the form. Hence, it could be, as the name suggests, the celebration of femininity. Accompanying music is one of the crucial aspects which could strengthen the performativity of the art form. As the form developed to the present status over a period of time, the musical background of the art form also underwent transformations and different scopes evolved. Following is a brief description of the characteristics of the transformation and the makeshifts occurred in accompanying music of *Mohiniyattam*.

Pakkamelam

Accompanying music (*Pakkamelam*) in *Mohiniyattam* is usually either *Carnatic* or *Sopanam*. Some kind of hybridity is always visible in the realm of *Mohiniyattam*-music. Artistes adapt the nuances of *Sopana* style of Music and admixture the quality of Carnatic music with it. However, regardless of the genre, the music of *Mohiniyattam* is evidently expressional. Among the percussion instruments, *Idakkka* has immense role in the musical background of *Mohiniyattam*. The slow and easeful beat of *Idakka* elevates the expressional quality of this art form. Both the traditional music systems, *Sopanam* and *Carnatic*, offer enormous possibilities for the performativity of *Mohiniyattam*. *Toppi Maddalam*, which was once a traditional percussion-accompaniment for *Mohiniyattam* got gradually eliminated as the attention was paid solely to the system of Carnatic music. Restoring this highly vibrant barrel

²³⁵ “Sharipo is especially sensitive to how oppression is lived by the female body / subject, how women in particular have been transformed through a patriarchal will to dominate and to subjugate, into ornaments of male desire to be worn as decorative signs that signify male ownership and power”(Mac Laren,1999: IX).

²³⁶ This is why the art form still sticks into the premises of medieval feudal set up. No dancers of today consciously take up a movement against this.

shaped drum strengthened the natal part of *Mohiniyattam* performances to a great extent. Since, *Mohiniyattam* revolves around *Varthula Chalanam* (circular and cylindrical movements) the cylindrical echo of *Maddalam* makes a perfect-match with the inner-idea of the form.²³⁷ *Nattuvangam*, as in any other south Indian classical dance traditions, leads the performance. It conjoins the string of *Tauryatrikam* (*Dance, Music, and Percussion*). Now a days, *Chenda*, a drum instrument that comes under the traditional category of *Asura Vadya*, is also used for the conceptual works of *Mohiniyattam*. *Chenda* usually functions vertically. The two sides of *Chenda* are characterised with distinct tonal structures of sound. The up-side-face creates gentle and majestic sounds while the down-side-face produces vibrant, raw sounds. Today, many talented artistes make use of these diverse system of sounds accurately to support the theme and mood of their performances.²³⁸ Presently, in most of the dance performance productions, it is the dancer who becomes the centre of every action. It could be this concept, which sprouted in her vision, which is the ultimate work to be produced in the near future. Thus, if only she/ he has the knowledge about the allied requirements of the performance, she/he could flourish with the creation. Though not everyone in the field are proficient in this skill, those who are, could come up with reverberating repository of *Mohiniyattam* acts. Above all, it is through the complex processes of omissions, adaptations and recreations, the dance gets developed and expanded with its possibilities, from the initial stature of numbness to the present dynamic and vibrant repertoire.

Repertoire

The established and classicalised format of *Mohiniyattam* repertoire includes, *Cholkettu*, *Jatiswaram*, *Varnam*, *Padam*, *Thillana*, *Sloksam* and *Saptham*, which are evidently adopted from the other dance-music traditions of South India. This pattern is thus known as *Kutcheri Vativu* of *Mohiniyattam* repertoire. Apart from this, *Desi* format is also followed in *Mohiniyattam* repertoire these days. The rites and the rituals of *Desi* numbers resemble the traditional native folk performing arts. Hence this

²³⁷ The sound texture of *Maddale* is cylindrical.

²³⁸ “There could be emerging much potency and intensity in the context of musical body of the performance, if it is envisioned and composed by the performer him/her self”, opined Methil Devika during the global success of her documentary “SarpaTatwa”. It is also an interesting fact that the musical direction of *SarpaTatwa* has been made by the director cum performer, herself. It could be her autobiographical experience that made her realise and opine about the current need of musical competence for the performers.

format can be regarded as more antique than the *KutcheriVativu* of *Mohiniyattam*. *Sopanam* is a renovated format of *Mohiniyattam* repertoire. In *Sopana* style of rendition, *Mohiniyattam* is completely recast into a pure ritualistic form. Numbers, now rendered in the *Sopana* style, have been instituted from the vision of Kavalam Narayana Panikkar through the relentless efforts of Kanak Rele and Bharathi Shivaji.

KutcheriVativu (Concert type)

Cholkettu: *Chol-ketuu* is the first number in the traditional repertoire of *Mohiniyattam*. *Chollu* means syllable and *Kettu* stands for a knot. *Cholkettu* is thus the collection of syllables. Traditionally it begins with an invocatory verse which is usually in praise of lord *Ganesha*. The traditional *Cholkettu* which is taught in *Kalamandalam* (“*Kitathakithadimthadimi... Bhagavatheekalyanidehimemangalam...*”) is in raga Chakravakam and it starts with *Athitha-Vishama-Graham*.²³⁹ This is considered as the iconic number in the *Kutcheri* system, because in no number, other than in *Cholkettu*, the regional mnemonic syllables are practised.

Jatiswaram: *Jatiswaram*, a pure dance expression is also known as the poetry of the feet. In this number, the different clusters of movement patterns with *Kalasha adavus* are interlinked by the *Chari* movements. The first known *Jatiswaram* is ‘*Ma ga ri sa*’ in raga *Chenjuruti*.

Varnam: *Varnam* is a high expression of any south Indian classical dance genre. It is *Nrithya* that deals with both the bodily and inwardly expressions.

Padam: *Padam* is generally treated as an inevitable piece in the repertoire of *Mohiniyattam* since its related to the *Abhinaya*. Compositions of Swathi Thirunal and Irayimman Thampi written in *Manipravalam* provide a treasure of possibilities in this genre.

Thillana: *Thillana* is an energetic piece comprising a rhyme of foot work. Different patterns of movements are showcased in this number. *Dhanasree Thillana* (of Swathi Thirunal) has been quite popular in *Mohiniyattam* until present.

²³⁹*Atheetha Vishama Graham*: “When the starting point of the composition falls on the beginning or the first beat (down beat) of the Tala cycle it is called *Sama Graha* (*Sama* means even in Sanskrit). When it doesn’t fall on the first beat, it is called *Vishama Graham*. *Vishama Graha* is further divided into two kinds; *Ateetha Graham* and *Anaagatha Graham*. When the composition starts before the *Sama* or down beat of the cycle, it is known as *Ateetha Graha*. And when it starts after *Sama*, it is called *Anagata Graha*” (Harish k. Narayan, 2011).

Saptham: *Saptham* is a unique number, which is still being used in Kalyanikuttiyamma School of *Mohiniyattam*. Kalamandalam Kalyanikuttiyamma learnt this number from the hereditary practitioners and revitalised it through her innovative choreographic ideas. Like the *Shabdam* of *Bharathanatyam*, *Saptham* is also a verse played in praise of individual Hindu deities. Now a variety of *Saptham* is being performed in praise of different deities and local legends.

Sopanam

The *Sopana* tradition of *Mohiniyattam* was pioneered by the theatre visionary Kavalam Narayana Panickkar in 1970s through his association with the non-native performers and researchers in *Mohiniyattam*. He composed musical chore for *Mohiniyattam* performances and helped the dancers immensely to revitalise the traditional elements of the form. His vision widened the horizons of the art form and other music and movement traditions began to mark their presence in the performative and pedagogic realm of *Mohiniyattam*. The following are some of the pieces that were revived and adapted into the repertoire of *Mohiniyattam* under his guidance.

Ganapathy: *Ganapathy* is an invocatory piece done in praise of lord *Ganapathy*. *Marma Ganapathy* and *Ganapathy Tyani* are more popular in this number.

Mukhachalam: *Mukhachalam* is the introduction of movement patterns. It is full-fledged with the Ragas and Thalās of native origin. It was reintroduced to the performativity of *Mohiniyattam* by Kavalam Narayana Panickkar.

Niram: Lexical meaning of the word is colour. This number is influenced from the folk cult of the Kali worship. ‘*Nirampadal*, a rite embraced in the *Kali* worship ritual (portraying the figure of *Kali* with five natural colours with music accompaniment) is the root of this number.

Padam: A poetic piece. Usually, *Manipravala* Kavyas are used in this genre.

Tatwam: Literal meaning of the word is religious philosophy. It is related to the *Pradakshina* ritual performed by devotees around the temple sanctorum.

Jeeva: A symbolic piece that indicates the *Arohana* (upward-journey) of devotee through the *Sopanam* (holy steps) towards his/ her deity. It is the final number in the order of the *Sopana* system of *Mohiniyattam*.

Desi (Regional)

Poli: An invocation, rooted in the ground of ancient Shakthi cult (worship of Mother Goddess) of Kerala.²⁴⁰

Easal: A philosophical conversation between two women (Parwati Kurathy and Lakshmi Kurathy) of *Kurava* community. This item is revived by Nirmala Panikkar from the *Lakshmi Parwati Samvadham Pattu*. The music orientation of this piece had been done by Kavalam Narayana Panikkar.

Mukkuthi: The story of missing a nose-pin. It's a theme which gradually steps into the sphere of salvation. Again, it says about a woman from *Kurava* community who loses her nose-pin and searches for it all around and finally finds it.²⁴¹

Chandanam: *Chandanam* is a delicate treat, of the movements that is performed while beautifying the body of *Nayika* on her own, with the fragrance of sandal oil.

Kummi: A group number of clap dancing.²⁴²

Experimental Choreography

In the ever-changing society, experimentation is essential, to keep the art form relevant. Classical dance forms collectively are inclined to crystallise and seclude themselves from the realities of the contemporary world. However, some artistes with great expertise and vision are now engaged in developing and connecting *Mohiniyattam* to the contemporary world. Thus, *Mohiniyattam* has now been accorded with a great place for working-up with new and old-new, realistic and non-realistic interpretations of themes. *Defining the feminine* has been a great attraction of all times and diverse kinds of experimentations have happened each and every time, in the terrain of *Mohiniyattam*. Innovative themes and codes that were unfamiliar to this form earlier were creatively adapted by the performers as part of enhancing the art form. Experimental choreographies are indubitably the need of the hour as they

²⁴⁰ This was performed in *Mohiniyattam* as collecting the 'Mohini Panam' (remuneration for the dancer) during the 18th and 19th centuries. See more for details, Chathu Nair, Cheruvalath. (1990). Meenakshi. (Malayalam). Thrissur: Kerala Sahithya Akademi.

²⁴¹ The story could not have a historical value as those days only women from the upper caste were allowed to wear *Mookuthi*. (Nose stud) and *Kurava* Community was a marginalised community. But this theme could have come in *Mohiniyattam* from the strong influence of Desi traditions. And the string of this story has some resemblance with the then social situation. As in this number, the character of *Kurathi* gets satisfaction through finding her nose stud back. Where in the original social context, the marginalised women had protested against their lack of freedom for wearing *Mookuthi*.

²⁴² This is exclusively derived from the native folk culture. Many tribal and folk dances of south India have this clapping pattern of movement. Traces of similar movement patterns; circular and clapping are seen in the dances of *Paniya* and *Adiyan* tribal communities.

bring afresh leaf of life to the form. Productions like *Chilappathikaram*, Swan-lake, *Poothapattu* and so on could be adapted as illustrations to exemplify the same.²⁴³ In accordance with the new air of unexplored themes, the attire and the setting of *Mohiniyattam* have also been subjected to experimentation.

Aharyam

As with every other aspect, *Aharyam* (attire) of *Mohiniyattam* also changed considerably to evolve into the current design. The essential character of simplicity of the attire, with an off-white cloth with golden border and a hair-bun on the top left of the head is what is evoked in one's mind while thinking of *Mohiniyattam*. However, Saree was a clothing imported later to the coastal land of Kerala, where delicate white cotton *Dothies*²⁴⁴ were more prevalent. The white cotton dress combination must have been used to combat the high humidity of the region. Even though the dancing sculptures of ancient temples in Kerala are clad in simple *Dothi*, *Mohiniyattam* had never been brought into the proscenium stage in that manner. The off white-saree which was used in *Mohiniyattam* for a short term might have been adapted from the neighbouring culture of *Dasiyattam*. During the initial days of the performativity of *Mohiniyattam* at *Kerala Kalamandalam*, a piece of white cloth was worn on the top of *Bharathanatyam* attire to make *Mohiniyattam* distinct from other art forms. The design of *Bindi* that is worn on the forehead was the same as in *Bharathanatyam* (Vertical *Bindi*) (Kalamandalam Sugandi, Interview, Kalamassery, 25, Oct, 2015). The design of *Bindi* that is presently used, has been adopted later by the performers and advisers of the field. And this circular shape eventually gained prominence in the make-up of *Mohiniyattam*. It was even termed as a cultural tag of Malayali-ness in the performativity of the art form. The entry of this *Bindi* into the concept of attire of the Malayali woman is also a subject that needs to be revisited and explained contextually by the contemporary society. The vertical *Bindi* was not popular in the embellishment of Malayali women earlier. The significance of the round-shaped *bindi* is intimately bound up with the marriage customs of the Aryanised-male-dominant society of India. Traditionally, the use of this *bindi* was initiated by the Hindu community of India to

²⁴³ '*Poothapattu*', (Mahakavi Edassery's poem based on a folk tale) choreographed and presented by Vinitha Nedungadi in 1998. *Chilappathikaram* was brought into many dancers including Methil Devika.

²⁴⁴ The *dhotis* which women wore were called '*Achipudava*', "a smooth white cotton cloth with beautiful gold border. It was usually worn by the woman of upper castes as a mark of distinction" (G S. Jayasree, 2016).

distinguish married women from the unmarried. However, in South India, except the widows, the married as well as the spinsters wear this dot on their forehead to imply womanhood. Many users also interpret it as the ‘representation of the third eye’²⁴⁵. Besides these interpretations, there is a key concept which still underlie in the phenomenon of “*Bindi-fying the self*” (Wajihah Hamid,2015).²⁴⁶. It could be perceived as a symbol of domestication of the native females rather than an aesthetic application. The red dot indicates the availability and approachability of females for domesticating their womanhood under the power and desire of men.²⁴⁷ The application of this *Bindi* in *Mohiniyattam* has the same objective. The vertical *Bindi* apparently denotes a sense of freedom as it is not framed into any fixed shape.²⁴⁸ And in the Hindu tradition, the vertical *Bindi* worn by a man to symbolise his vigour and victory. Hence, the round *Bindi* is indicative of nothing but a character of submissiveness in the performative realm of *Mohiniyattam*.



Plates 5.14(Painting of Nair lady) and 5.15 (Nair lady, Women of India, Gutenberg.org)

Howbeit, clothing apparent to the *dhoti* tradition has been formulated in the milieu of *Mohiniyattam* in the recent decades. This three-part-wear (*Uthareeyam* and Blouse, *Njorivu*, *Pavada*) is the most established and accepted attire of *Mohiniyattam*

²⁴⁵“Besides being seen as a ‘third eye’, it is thought to balance one’s internal energy.”

²⁴⁶This term has been taken from the research article titled, “Bindi-fying the self: Cultural Identity among Diasporic South Asians.” (Wajihah Hamid, 2015).

²⁴⁷Till recent years, there was a belief and practice prevailed among the people of Kerala. Women were abstained from wearing Red colour *Bindi* during their menstrual period, instead they were allowed to put on black colour *Bindi*. This could be related to the domestication and sexual exploitation of the females of the land. It indicated the physical condition of the woman and also the man could understand whether she was approachable or not, for satisfying his sexual pleasures.

²⁴⁸ It was part of a refresh movement that occurred in the making of modern Malayali attire, the vertical *Bindi* got initial visibility in the society. Then it was practiced as an urban gesture of woman hood. No traditional believers of women accepted taking this change of practice.

today. *Njorivu* (fan of lower torso) and *Pavada* (fleeted-wrap-skirt) are functional to augment the movement patterns of *Mohiniyattam*. *Pavada* could mirror-up the swaying movements of lower limbs and regulate the parameters of lifts and jumps. *Njorivu* enhances the circular and *Aramandala* movements of *Mohiniyattam*. Performers occasionally modify the costume in accordance with the text and context of their performances, which are oft-times done on the border colour and rarely on adapting a Pajama wear.²⁴⁹ Besides all these characteristics, the parts of this attire also imply some hidden trickeries of the voyeuristic pleasures of male-gaze. Each of the parts of this attire carry some secret codes of sexual gratification of men. These parts are made out by laying emphasis and showcasing different curves of the female body. For instance, The *Njorivu* (small fan), is worn on the waist (refer to the picture below), characterise the blossoming of womanhood and the curve of the bottom line. The flow of '*Uthareeyam*' clearly depict the curves of the upper torso. These variables indicate that, like the other aspects, the evolution of the dress code of *Mohiniyattam* has also evolved from the male-ideas of womanliness. The hairdo is *Konda Kettal* (hair-bun at the left top of the head) in all schools, except for the Kalyanikuttyamma School. In Kalyanikuttyamma School, it is the traditional '*Nagalamatham*' (long braided hair). Jasmine buds are the major embellishments for hair.²⁵⁰ Traditional golden temple jewellery are worn as ornaments.

The women hairdo, '*Konda Kettal*' was an unembellished hair style which was prevalent mostly among the working-class women of Kerala. It was also done by the elite class women. *Kondakettal* could have derived from the day to day lives of the people of Kerala, in accordance with its environment and climate. Kalyanikuttyamma School opposes the adaptation of *Kondakettal* in *Mohiniyattam*, as this style was merely drawn from the portraits of Raja Ravi Varma. However, this claim lacks substantial evidence as it was not only prevalent in the region of Travancore (as stated by Smitha Rajan) but also in other parts of Kerala. To substantiate this argument, one can draw upon archival evidences, which point to the fact that the women in Malabar and Travancore appear with this hairdo in old photographs.²⁵¹

²⁴⁹ This style of costume was invented by the acclaimed performer Vinitha Nedungadi.

²⁵⁰ (Jasmine buds are associated with the marriage system of some communities of Kerala, which could be a symbol of virginity.)

²⁵¹ The evidences are found from many authentic historical archives in the public domain. Of the both provinces, photographs of women belonging to the working class as well as that of the elite class is also available with the same hairdo (please see the appendix for the same).

Ekaharyam of Mohiniyattam today



Plates 5.16 [Mohiniyattam Artiste, Asha Sarath (daughter of Kalamandalam Sumathi)] and 5.17 [Smitha Rajan (Grand daughter of Kalamandalam Kalyanikuttyamma)]

Not only the *Aharyam* but also the changing dimensions of the staging space and the theatre techniques including lights and set considerably contributed towards developing the visibility as well as the performative efficacy of *Mohiniyattam*. These additional theatrical aspects which were initially considered as taboos began to get slowly assimilated into the shows of *Mohiniyattam* performances. The dimensions of colour and mood, multiple staging positions, elevated plains and different kinds of stage properties used for the creative choreographic productions of *Mohiniyattam*, that demanded a new set of skills to improve the body kinaesthetic, came into the practising culture of *Mohiniyattam*. The development of all these aspects are actually based on the changing dimensions of its (the form's) relationship with the setting, spectator and the performer. It is the demands and circumstances of the changing times that define the means of the spectatorship and the productivity of any art form. Thus, the triangular relationship of the three entities: setting, performer and spectator is inevitable in the growth of any art form.

Mohiniyattam has been viewed by the spectators at different levels through different ages. It was initially performed for a closed set of audience. Then through ages it was moved to the stage culture of proscenium and now it is presented in the venues which had been alien to them. Consequent to the changes of venues and

spectatorship, the form has also undergone changes. The change of spectatorship also influenced the presentation of the art form.

Spectatorship and *Mohiniyattam*

The continuous process of adaptations and transformations of the 'Form' could have been resulted from the conjoined triangular relationship of the spectator, the performer and the setting. These three characters reflect each other and simultaneously influence the form. This phenomenon has a huge role in the development of *Mohiniyattam*. This could be understood better with the help of a diagrammatic representation.

The diagram has three components such as six arrows, three dots and three lines which form a triangular shape. The dots indicate three major factors in the development of the form and its presentation which include the performer, setting and spectator. The outer lines which make the shape of the triangle denote the connection between these characters. The inward pointed arrows imply the input of the character into the development of the form and its presentation. The outward arrows (eg. form to performer, form to setting etc.) indicate the after effect/ consequence of the performance.

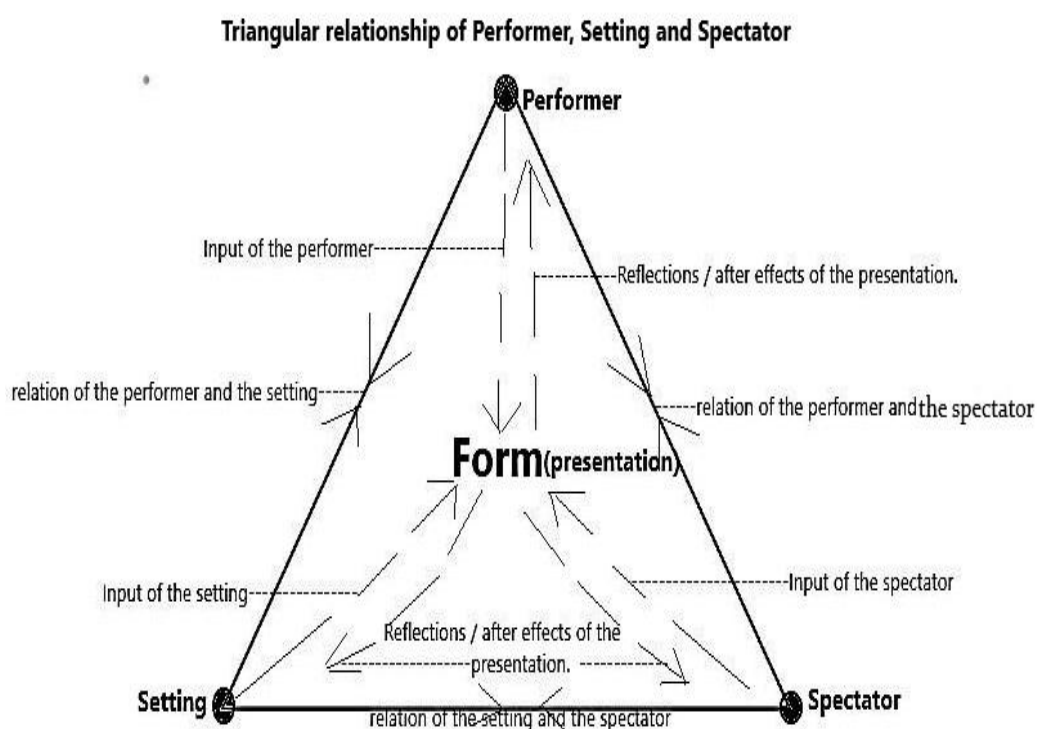


Plate no. 5.18

[Diagram note: This triangular model indicates the function of form which has three components viz., performer, setting and spectator. The arrows imply the nature of relationship among the components.]

(Developed by the researcher after analysing the relationship of these characters through participant and non-participant observations in the field)

The presentation of the form is influenced by these three inputs. And the reflections of the presented act, in return, influence the sources of the inputs mentioned earlier. These consequential reflections may vary in certain degrees. It could be a self-awakening experience for the performer, while for the audience it could be an experience of a sort of ‘rasa’. And finally, the setting happens to get transformed into a mystical and ethereal space after the full-blossomed dance presentation.

This is the major phenomenon that happens during the preparation and the presentation of *Mohiniyattam* (or any concert-oriented dance form). Therefore, the growth of the form and its spectatorship are mutually dependant. There are five major phases of development in the growth of spectatorship in *Mohiniyattam*. It is defined through the change of setting, performance-type or motive and the audience type. (The diagram given below illustrates the phenomenon)

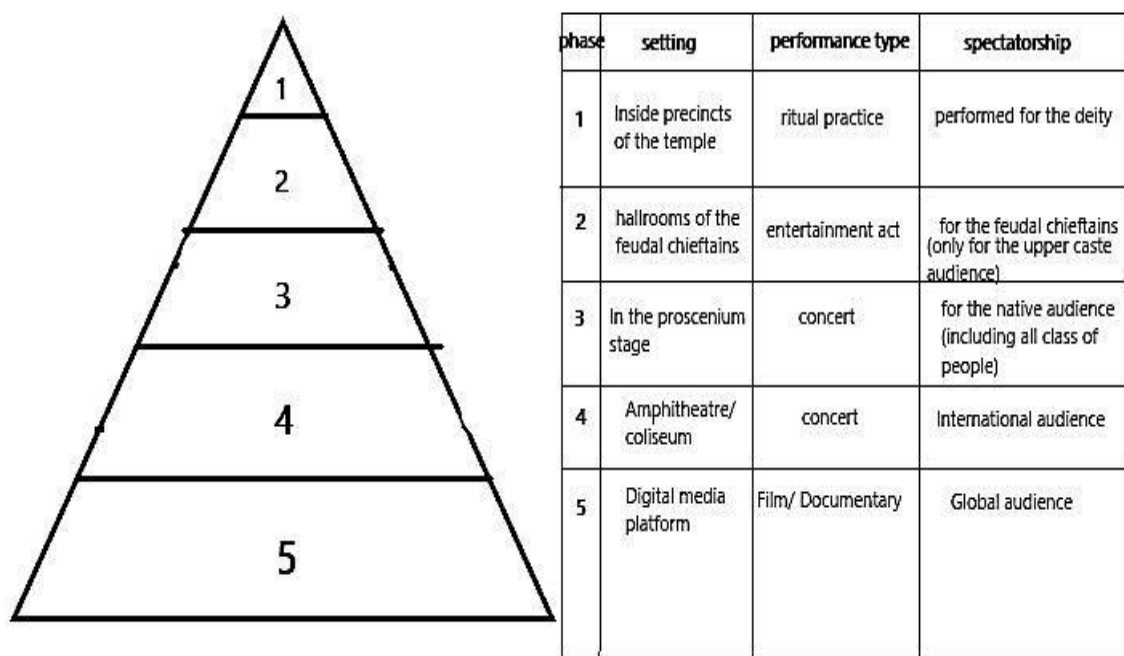


Plate no. 5.19 (Developed and sketched by the researcher)

[Diagram note: This graph shows the growth and the transformation of the performativity, setting and spectatorship of *Mohiniyattam* from the initial level of temple culture to the digital platform of performativity.]

Initially, the Spectatorship of *Mohiniyattam* was limited to a few members, when the performer danced only to please the deity. Her interaction with the deity was done through her dance movements. She would execute such kind of movements which exalt the ambience to a horizon where the earthly and the ethereal beings meet.²⁵² Thus, the dance movements presented there was part of *Aradhana* (worship). The demands and desires of the deity as conceptualised by the dancer, were materialised by herself through the dance patterns. This 'interaction' made the commoners accredit her as a mysterious person. This belief could also have attributed the dancers with a distinct and respectful status in the society, even though they might have been exploited inside the temple circles. In this stage of the spectatorship, dance is perceived as more of a ritual, hence no concerns of seeking pleasure could be attached to it. Movements also could have reflected the same. The nature and the intention of movements were based on the purpose, setting and spectatorship.

In the second phase, *Mohiniyattam* was moved to the hall rooms of feudal patrons. By this time, the above said reputation and mystical identity of the dancers were no longer in prevalence. The feudal aura that one can still discern from the face of *Mohiniyattam* was actually attained by the art form during this phase. The performance was done in a closed setting and both the performers and spectators belonged to the privileged upper castes. In this phase, the text and the context of the performance were more emphasised on the taste of the spectators. Hence, the commercialization of *Mohiniyattam* can be said to have been started from this phase. '*Mohinipanam*' (the remuneration which was given to the dancers) is a trace of such financial dealing of *Mohiniyattam* performances. However, the art form took considerable time to get restructured into the concert type and get relocated to the recent proscenium setting.

From this phase onwards, *Mohiniyattam* started gaining popularity in the public domain. The socialization of *Mohiniyattam* initially occurred in this phase. The performance of *Mohiniyattam* became part of social events, leading to the growth of its spectatorship. This new setting comprising of people from all classes of the society, demanded the art form to adapt a new cultural milieu. Through adapting the ideology of the then society, the values of *Mohiniyattam* began to get restructured into newly adapted concerns of morality. And step by step, *Mohiniyattam* could evolve

²⁵² The root idea of this dancer to deity-interaction could be traced back to the ancient practices of shamanism.

into a dance form with a classicalised format. All these changes have been mirrored from the reflection of the interconnections that happened among the performer, spectator and setting of the form.

The scope of *Mohiniyattam* has been extended to a global level at present. Today, lots of experimentations take place in the arena of *Mohiniyattam* recitals. For instance, the setting up of theatrical lights in the scenario of *Mohiniyattam* to complement the art form is a remarkable development. It must be noted that all these adaptations of new visual metaphors happen in tune with the changing tastes of the spectatorship. The grand-events like ‘thousands’ bells on one stage’ is an epitome of new way of the commercialization of *Mohiniyattam*. It can also impact upon the quality of the form. When it comes to the competition circuits, the peripheral form of the art is being highlighted. Therefore, there could be a compromise with the real essence of the form. Group performances of *Mohiniyattam* is at great demand now and is being marketed highly word wide. The group appearance of *Mohiniyattam* with the accompaniment of LED light and graphical light equipment (mood elevators) with its natural off-white attire spontaneously make a charm on stage. Thus, with or without the real craft, the form could be appreciated and sold for a fortune. Today there are many performers of *Mohiniyattam*, but not all of them share a single purpose. Some of them concentrate on the development of the form whereas others work for fiscal benefits and therefore they concentrate on the commercialization of the form. Some are engaged in hybridising it for getting a tight-packed audience at the international level. All these opportunities opened new avenues for the dancers to explore the form with their creative ideas in the new media alternatives. These interventions linked *Mohiniyattam* to the present age of digital culture. Along with these transformations of visual metaphors and image constructions in the choreographies, the spectatorship of *Mohiniyattam* also underwent great changes. ‘Dance to the idol’, ‘dance to the closed group’, ‘dance to the masses’, ‘dance to the alien’ (in the sense to the one who is a total stranger of the culture) have been the different contexts of *Mohiniyattam* venues.

Spectatorship and Female Objectification

“O body swayed to music, O brightening glance, how can we know the dancer from the dance?”(Yeats, 1926).This poetic line of Yeats could be a sharp observation

on dance spectatorship. Does everybody enjoy dance in this way? Separating the body of the dancer from the dance is like reading a text without a context. Drenching into the external colours could not bestow the inner beauty or the true essence of the art form. Dancer's body could just be an instrument toned to the heart of this art. If one wants to grasp the true essence of the art, his/ her heart has to be pure/ *reflective as a clear mirror*²⁵³ and then he/she will be able to rise above her own existence and embrace the character; and drink the complete essence of the art.

Yet, if a woman performs on stage, she often becomes an object of male gaze as men to look through her body characteristics rather than concentrating on the art that she brings-forth. It is often perceived as a natural human behaviour. And this aspect could probably make the parents (of ages from postcolonial to the present) anxious to advise dance as a career for their children. Because peripherally a common spectator could think that dance is completely a body-oriented activity. The lowest grade of understanding of dance could be extremely degrading. Thereby the skill of dance could be misconstrued into 'showcasing the body limbs'.

All these conceptions are dependent upon 'how man watches woman'. This erotic gaze of men whether paved on the road or on the stage is nothing but an act of sexual attraction or sexual objectification. "This sexual attraction blinds us to ugliness instead of opening our eyes to the beauty" (Bernad Shah, 19 62:97). Hovering over the peripheral aspects of a dancing body cannot elevate one to the true idea and substance of the form. King Kulasekhara's classification of audience becomes relevant in this regard. He categorizes the spectators into two: *Prekshaka* (the one who enjoys the true essence of the art) and *Nanaloka* (the one who is incapable of seeing the true form of art and only roaming around the peripheral attractions of the same). Even though, he discusses it within the frame of *Koodiyattam*, it could be applicable to any visual and performing art. A rising trend particularly in the setting of *Mohiniyattam* is devaluing the art according to the mind-set of this previously mentioned *Nanalokam*. The ideology of today's native- *Nanalokamis* rooted in the Christian perspectives of art. Success of a true art can be achieved only with good talents and quality spectators.

Influences of Other Art Forms on *Mohiniyattam*

Today what we see as *Mohiniyattam* has been evolved through various complex processes that involved the omission of certain elements and addition of

²⁵³ Abhinavaguptan – *Prekhaka Lakshanam*

various aspects from different sources that have been attached to its soil. Among the languages, Telugu, Sanskrit, *Manipravalam* and Malayalam influenced the art form in its initial stages. Yet, among them, *Manipravalam* and Malayalam had been chosen often. Now in the global culture, the art form crosses all linguistic and cultural boundaries in the selection and adaptation of new languages. So is the music score of the form. It stretched its span from the formerly used *Sopana tradition* to the successful implementation of Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake (Western Classic Music) by the internationally renowned *Mohiniyattam* dancer/ choreographer Vijaya Laxmi. There could be no scope of hesitation in acknowledging the fact that this form is indebted to many other forms of art, as it is evident from the periphery of the form itself. *Thiruvathirakali* is one of the ceremonial dances of ancient Kerala (which is still a religious and ceremonial dance) that has great influence on *Mohiniyattam*. Some of the elements of this form are quite visible in *Mohiniyattam*. Simplicity is the crux idea of *Thiruvathirakali* and this quality is also the heart-core of *Mohiniyattam*.

The technique and *Abhinaya* of *Mohiniyattam* have been refined under the influence of *Kathakali*. It was quite possible for the form to get more acquainted with *Kathakali* as *Kathakali* was taught in the same premises where *Mohiniyattam* was taught. Teachers constantly seek help from *Kathakali* masters to improve their new choreographies, and this could have often been a reason for these influences. In a few schools of *Mohiniyattam*, the influence of *Nangiar Koothu* can also be observed. This is found with finesse in Nirmala Panikkar's School. Often, Methil Devika's choreographies also seem to have influenced from this art in particular with her *Netra-abhinaya*. The exercise patterns of *Mohiniyattam* such as *Veeshal*, *Chuzhippu*, *Madakku* and many more are exactly the same as in the practice of *Kalaripayattu*, the martial art form of Kerala. However, one could not assimilate the root of every movement tradition to this one single entity of *Kalari Payattu*.

Some patterns of *Adavus* are now being brought in the style of *Mohiniyattam* as pure adaptation of *Bharathanatyam*. This action could be the transition of a movement pattern from one form to another. Dr Neena Prasad has created some *Adavus* in this genus.

Kuchipudi is the form of dance that influenced the development of Kalyanikuttyamma School (Kalamandalam Sugandi, interview, Kalamassery, 25, Oct, 2015). *Mohiniyattam* holds the typical *Sahithya* pattern of *kuchipudi-Shabdham*. For instance;

“Jaya jaganthagirisamadheera

Sreedasaradarajakumara

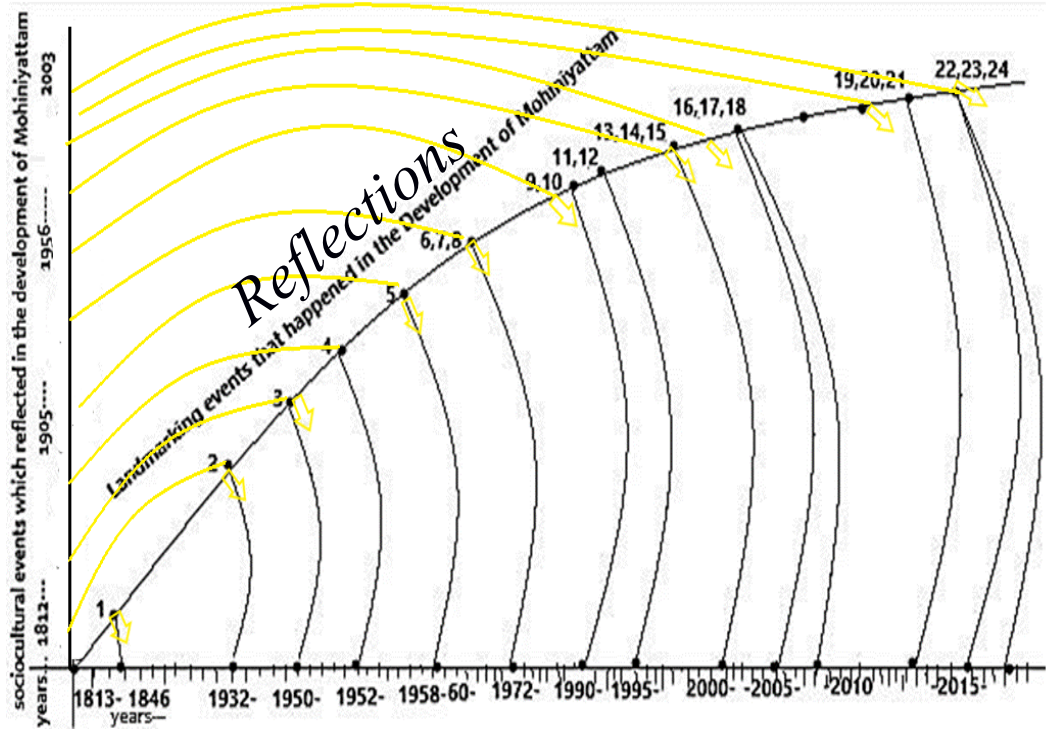
Maareechasubhahavidhara

Kara bhooshanadisamhara...” “Hau-haura-mekitam”

And the last conjoined word (*Hau-haura*) of this verse is said to have originated from Telugu culture.²⁵⁴ The reason behind this influence was the intervention of the ancient *Kuchipudi* dancers who were brought to the court of Travancore. The king was greatly impressed with the form of dancing and wanted his people to learn and practice it. That’s how *Kuchipudi* became crucial in the history of *Mohiniyattam* (Killimangalam Vasudevan Namputhirippadu, Interview, Mulamkunnathukavu, 25, March, 2014).

After surveying through the different aspects of *Mohiniyattam* tradition, one can easily observe certain mile stones in its growth and continuity. The following graph with the focus on the historical accounts identifies these milestones in the dynamic phase of *Mohiniyattam*’s growth and sustenance.

Milestones of Growth:



²⁵⁴ The word ‘haura’ comes in the Shabdams (a number) of Kuchipudi dance. And in Malayalam there is no such word has existed till the time.

Plate 5.20 (The Information is collected from various sources of Public Domain).

(5. 1) Land mark events in the development of <i>Mohiniyattam</i> :	Land mark sociocultural events:
<p>1. 1830's- Rejuvenation of the art in Swati's era. He adopted Mridangam and Flute from Carnatic tradition in the place of percussion and discarded the <i>Maddale</i>. Changed the pattern of singing to Carnatic system.</p>	<p>1812- Slave trade was stamped out by H.H. Rani Gouri Lakshmi Bhai of Travancore</p> <p>1813- Channar revolt, the fight of Channar women of Travancore to wear upper cloth and cover their breasts.</p> <p>1817-Primary education implemented as mandatory by H.H. Rani Gouri Lakshmi Bhai</p> <p>1831- The first Census was taken in Travancore.</p> <p>1834- Swati Thirunal introduced English education in Travancore.</p>
<p>2. 1932-<i>Mohiniyattam</i> was introduced in Kerala Kalamandalam by Mahakavi Vallathol Narayana Menon. Composed new items from the shattered remaining of the old pieces such as Panthadi, Mayura Nritta and so on. Dance students were also taught <i>Kathakali</i>.</p> <p>3. 1950-Kalamandalam Chinnammu Amma joined Kalamandalam and taught five items of <i>Mohiniyattam</i>.</p>	<p>1860- Mukuthi agitation- this strike was led by Aratupuzha Velayudha Panicker for the lower caste women to get the right to wear the nose stud.</p> <p>1887- The first Malayalam Novel, <i>Kundalatha</i>, the story of the Kalinga King's daughter was written by Appu Nedungadi.</p> <p>1889- The first major novel of Malayalam, <i>Indulekha</i> written by O Chandu Menon was published</p> <p>1891- Novel <i>Meenakshi</i> written by Chathu Nair, was published. The novel criticizes the evil practices of the then society including <i>Mohiniyattam</i>.</p> <p>1904- First railway in Travancore.</p> <p>1905- The newspaper 'Swadeshabimani' was published by Vakkom Abdul Khadar Moulavi.</p> <p>1915- Stone Necklace Protest- Fight of lower caste women to wear the ornaments they like. The lower caste women were not allowed to wear gold or silver ornaments.</p> <p>1915- Thonnuttamand struggle or</p>

	<p><i>Ooruttambalam</i> revolt- for the right to attend school lead by Ayankali. Till that time lower caste children were not allowed to attend school.</p> <p>1930- Kerala Kalamandalam was established.</p> <p>1930's- revolutionary theatre productions '<i>Adukkalayil Ninnu Arangathekku</i>' (VT Bhatadirippadu), '<i>Marakkudakkullile Mahanarakam</i>' (M.R.B), <i>Ritumathi</i> (Premji) were staged.</p>
<p>4. 1952- The <i>adavus</i> got systematized in the Kalyanikuttyamma School of <i>Mohiniyattam</i>; codified into four groups; <i>taganam, jaganam, misram, samisram</i>.</p> <p>5. 1955-The period of Kalamandalam Sathyabhama's tutelage and contributions in <i>Kalamandalam</i>. The first Muslim student, Kalamandalam Khadeeja joined in <i>Kalamandalam</i>.</p> <p>6. While in Kalamandalam style the whole <i>adavus</i> are divided into two; <i>Adavukal</i> and <i>Pirivukal</i> which are in total 30 in number, Guru Kalamandalam Leelamma further classified the <i>Adavus</i> into six major groups, adding more movement variations.</p>	<p>1956- Formation of Kerala State.</p> <p>1957- General election of Kerala, formation of the first communist ministry of Kerala.</p> <p>1958- <i>Achipudava</i> strike- Fight of the backward caste women to wear the soft off-white cloth which was woven by them.</p>
<p>7. 1960-Kalamandalam Sathaybhama developed the proper structure and curriculum for <i>Mohiniyattam</i>.</p> <p>8. 1968-Kalamandalam Sathyabhama teacher experimented the <i>konda</i> style hairdo for <i>Mohiniyattam</i>.</p>	<p>Education Reformation Bill Passed in Kerala.</p> <p>Green Revolution in India.</p>
<p>9. 1970's-Sopana music tradition was reinvented in <i>Mohiniyattam</i> by the veteran <i>gurus</i> Bharati Shivaji and Kanak Rele with the great support of Kavalam Narayana Panikker.</p> <p>10. 1970's-They brought back the traditional percussion instruments which were discarded by Maharaja Swati Tirunal, such as <i>Maddale</i>, <i>Idaykka</i>, <i>Ilathalamand</i> so on.</p> <p>11. 1970's-They also adopted syllables of the percussion instruments to the <i>jathi</i> rendition of <i>Mohiniyattam</i> and started to use the <i>desi</i> style of rhythmic patterns namely, <i>panchari, champada</i>,</p>	<p>Land Reformation Bill was passed in Kerala.</p> <p>M.T Vasudevan Nair's "<i>Nirmalyam</i>" brings new sensibility to Malayalam Cinema.</p> <p>1970's-Modernism at its peak in Malayalam literature. The novels of O V Vijayan, M. Mukundan, Kakanaadan, VKN, Kovilanand many more come to the forefront of Malayalam literature.</p> <p>Emergence of '<i>Thanath Nataka Vedi</i>'. (The theatre of organic performance).</p>

<p><i>muriyadantha, kundanachi</i> and so on. 1975- <i>Mohiniyattam</i> was introduced in the state competition of Kerala School Kalolsavam.</p> <p>12. 1979- Natana Kaishiki was established by Nirmala Panicker. She revived the desi tradition of <i>Mohiniyattam</i>.</p>	<p>1975 – Declaration of ‘emergency’, restricting the freedom of expression.</p>
<p>13. 1980’s- The works of Kanak Rele, Bharathi Shivaji and Kavalam Narayana Panikkar at the zenith.</p>	<p>The growth of Malayalam Parallel Cinema movement led by Padmarajan, Bharathan, P A Becker, John Abraham and many more.</p> <p>New movement in the realm of mass-health and literacy.</p>
<p>14. 1990’s- Schooling system was introduced in the curriculum of Kalamandalam.</p> <p>15. First national workshop of <i>Mohiniyattam</i> was held at Thrissur organized by Sangita Nataka Academy.</p> <p>16. 1990- First film division documentary on <i>Mohiniyattam</i> by Sivan in English.</p> <p>17. 1995- Establishment of dance department in Sree Sankara University of Sanskrit, Kalady. Also, commencement of the degree course for <i>Mohiniyattam</i> in the university.</p>	<p>Kerala becomes the first state to attain 100% literacy.</p> <p>Secular production in <i>Kathakali</i> like Manava Vijayam.</p> <p>An awakening in the cultural realm of Kerala.</p>
<p>18. 2000’s- Experiments with rasas other than Sringara rasa were started in <i>Mohiniyattam</i>. (Kalamandalam Leelamma experimented the <i>Roudra</i> rasa as the predominant one.)</p> <p>19. Contemporary poems (Modern Malayalam poems) and themes of the western concepts (Like; Mary Magdalene) were experimented in dance literature.</p> <p>20. 2000- <i>Mohiniyattam</i> as a degree course commenced in <i>Kalamandalam</i>. The syllabus was designed by SSUS, Kalady and the certificate was issued by the same.</p> <p>21. 2000’s- Neena Prasad became the first person in south India to get PhD in Dance for her thesis entitled “The</p>	<p>UNESCO proclaimed <i>Koodiyattam</i> as the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.</p> <p><i>Koodiyattam</i> and <i>Nangiarkoothu</i> were introduced in Kerala School Kalolsavam.</p> <p>Establishment of <i>Kalamandalam</i> as a deemed university under the UGC rule.</p> <p>2007-commencement of PG courses in Kalamandalam Deemed University.</p>

<p>concepts of Lasya and Tandava in the classical dances of South India-A detailed Study”. This was awarded by the Rabindra Bharathi University, Calcutta.</p> <p>22. 2000’s- Started analysing the art form from N.S perspective and interpreted Charis and Karanas of N. S. through <i>Mohiniyattam</i> vocabulary by guru Kalamandalam Sughandhi.</p> <p>23. 2000’s- ‘Karukare Karmukil’ of Kavalam Narayana Paniker got popularity even among the common-spectators through the choreographic presentation of Vinitha Nedungadi.</p> <p>24. Vinitha Nedungadi adapted pyjama attire for <i>Mohiniyattam</i> and her production received great appreciation, even though the attire created a long-lasting controversy.</p> <p>25. 2005-<i>Mohiniyattam</i> was performed on Tchaikovsky’s Swan Lake by Vijayalakshmi and was invited to the world acclaimed Bolshoi theatre.</p> <p>26. 2007- Dance of Enchantress, documentary of <i>Mohiniyattam</i> by Adoor Gopalakrishnan.</p>	<p>Commencement of M Phil, PhD courses in KKMDU.</p> <p>The first International Theatre Festival of Kerala commences at Thrissur.</p> <p>Popularization of indigenous and folk songs.</p>
<p>27. Post 2010’s-Male artistes in male attire started to perform <i>Mohiniyattam</i>.</p> <p>28. National level <i>Mohiniyattam</i> workshop at Bangalore in 2013.</p> <p>29. National level <i>Mohiniyattam</i> workshop at Kalamandalam in 2015.</p> <p>30. <i>Mohiniyattam</i> exclusive workshop at Delhi in 2017.</p> <p>31. 2019- Methil Devika’s Sarpa Tatwam (2018) got global attention as the first dance documentary film contested for the world OSCAR Awards from India.</p>	<p>Establishment of a Central University in Kerala.</p> <p>Diamond jubilee celebrations of the establishment of the state.</p> <p>Govt fellowship for thousand artistes of the state in connection with Diamond Jubilee celebrations for the establishment of the state.</p> <p>Women enter Shabarimala in accordance with the Supreme court verdict.</p>

[The information regarding the socio-cultural incidents are collected from various sources of public domain and also in consultation with various scholars in the respective fields.]

Observations

Art is not an isolated domain which has evolved on its own paradigms outside the circles of the society. It has always been an essential part of the culture and the daily life of the humankind. Thus, the reflections of cultural policies may be visible in the progression of any art tradition. Through the development chart of *Mohiniyattam*,

the researcher not only intend to trace the trajectory of the growth of *Mohiniyattam*, but also to read the connections and socio-cultural impulses which had impacted upon the development and change of the art form with the changing demands and circumstances of a period.

The art form achieved growth from simple establishments to complex frames of performativity. Drawing elements from the folk and indigenous traditions of performativity, the art form developed into a systematised and sophisticated form of expression. However, the civilized concepts of the form were not away from the ethos envisioned by the Manu Smriti. However, the reflections of socio-political changes are recognizable in the development of the form. For instance; it could be the reflection of the temple entry proclamation act that influenced the development of the *Mohiniyattam* institute, which moved the art form to a secular space. And the enlightenment movements of the socio-cultural and political milieu of the state also prompted the artistes to change the performative format of the form. A close inspection of the above tables will provide one with more impressions about the socio-cultural imprints on the art form.

Section II

Issues and Concerns Related to the Development of *Mohiniyattam*

The objective of the current research deals with identifying the problem in the pedagogical development of *Mohiniyattam*, particularly with the institutionalised culture. *Mohiniyattam* has evolved out of a huge lineage of traditions. According to the acceptance and the recognition of the experimentations put forth by current *Mohiniyattam* practitioners, the art form seems to have rooted in the divine dance rituals of the ancient Hindu temples as well as the social dance cultures flourished under *Chera* rule in Kerala. It journeyed through different domains of the society, such as courts/ mansions of aristocrats or other high-class magnates and gradually reached out to the large number of audiences of the popular culture at present. The art attained a considerable growth right from its initial phase. This dance form could be understood as the ‘left behind-end’ of a vast and great tradition of dancing. On the other side, it could also be perceived as the full-fledged form of a narrow old tradition of dancing.

Here are a few observations and apprehensions regarding the phases of development and disintegration of *Mohiniyattam*. This graph also provides a gist of the former chapters of this research work.

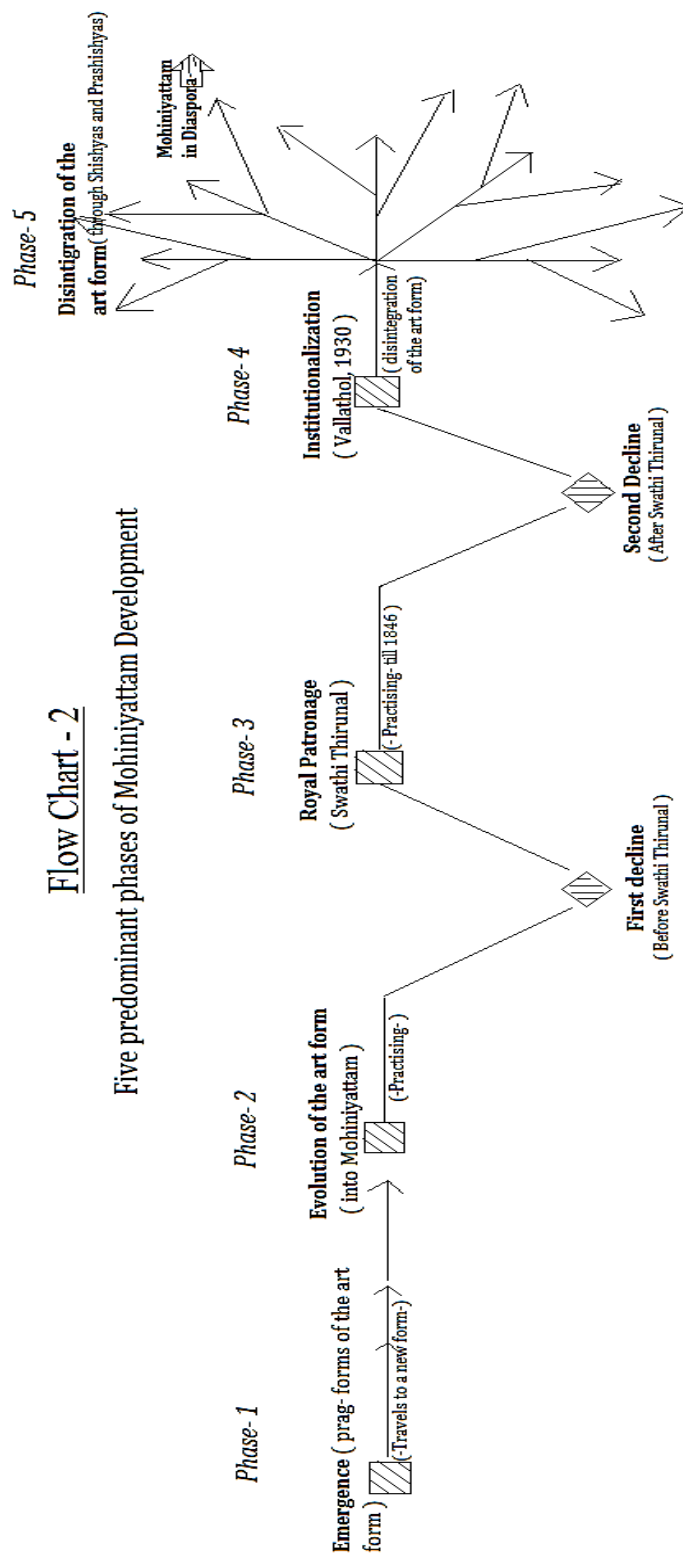


Plate 5.21 (developed by the researcher)

Five phases could be included in the growth of *Mohiniyattam*: *Emergence, Evolution, Royal patronage, Institutionalization* and *Disintegration*. (The blocks filled with diagonal lines in the flow chart indicate the growth of the art form while the other two blocks with vertical lines connote the downfall of the art form.) These junctures are predominant and have to be analysed in a meticulous manner in order to comprehend the entire phenomenon of pedagogical growth in *Mohiniyattam*. As discussed in the first chapter, this art form did not emerge at one point, instead, it had evolved through many ages and attained its present stature. The mind-set of the people played a prominent role at each juncture of its development. Growth and decline are the products of the same society, but are of altered ideologies.

The *Evolution* of this art form is said to have originated from the praxis of *Thevadichis / Devadasis*.²⁵⁵ An oft referred story regarding this origin was penned by the historian Elamkulam Kunhan Pillai, which says that the bringing out of *Devadasis* from the temples engendered a sensual feminine dance form which later developed into *Mohiniyattam*. However, the version of *Dasiyattam* in Kerala was known as *Thevadichi Attam*. Historical accounts refer to this unpleasant image with a euphemistic term, *Attam of the Deva Pada Dasi* in spite of its present conceptualization. *'Thevadichi'* or *'Veshya'* (prostitute) is the most awful and abusive title that any woman can tolerate today. The prevalent praxis associated with this term is nothing but prostitution. How did the society as a collective, attribute such a sense to this term? This is purely a social construction.²⁵⁶ It was the interest of certain dominant groups that turned out to be the resolution to demean an ethnic custom and bestow a great deal of social-hatred upon it. Ever since the establishment of social life of the humans, dance has been of different expressions: Freedom, Submissiveness, Devotion, Enlightenment, Healing, Merry-making and so on. Purpose and nature of dance vary according to the context and the group, involved therein. Hence, a form can pass through many of these expressions in accordance with the changing demands

²⁵⁵Koorlawala (2004) quotes Indrani Rehman, Dr Kanak Rele and Richard Schechner, regarding the connection of *Mohiniyattam* to the stories of devadasi cult, in her article titled The Sanskritised Body as; "However, it is in generalizing Indian dance history for brevity's sake, that the histories of the *Sadir* (and Kathak too) become conflated with the trajectories of *Mohiniyattam* whose dance and dancer (according to the then state of research) had become debased, practically non-existent in the early twentieth century" (para.11).

²⁵⁶ "The social class structure is reinforced by the dominant ideology" (Adair,1992:12).

"Usually it can be shown that the economically and politically dominant sections of the society is generally dominant ideologically. This ideology is powerful and pervasive and frequently not recognized, so that the dominant world view is assured to be 'common sense' apolitical and beyond challenge" (Adair,1992:12).

and concerns of the society. *Mohiniyattam* thus underwent a few phases of alteration. In regard to the phase under discussion (evolution), it was under the clout of feudalism. Many of the scholars believe and make a remark that feudalistic era was the golden age for the performing arts in Kerala. For instance, the eminent scholar S. Guptan Nair (2009), in his essay on art appreciation, opines that art and craft could have happily been alive if only the feudalistic tradition was unclogged. Thereby, he might have intended to express his strong opposition about the socialization (democratization) of art forms of Kerala. He also states that “*democratization of art is nothing but a crooked move by politicians to turn the ordinary mass against the artistes of good virtues.*” On what point do the scholars make an assertion about the artistic supremacy of feudalistic era? Art has travelled ahead of the age of feudalism. The progression was not dependent on the feudalistic supreme ideas alone. It broke its socio-cultural boundaries and adapted many ends of the folk-ethnicity. Even the most recent (Sep 2018 release) documentary film on *Mohiniyattam*, ‘*Sarpa Tatwa*’ by Methil Devika, chronicles an ethno-story which travels back far beyond the feudal setting.

The *Emergence* of this feminine-dance form would not have catered to the art alone, but also to the society which was then under the rule of patriarchs. Even *Kunjan Nambiar’s* verses provide some hints regarding the disrespectful attitude of the society. ‘*Maadani mulamaar Mohiniyattam*’: here the verse expresses the delicacy of the female body. It also indicates how the female body is being objectified in the society. Finally, it is the ‘*performers of Mohiniyattam with buxom chests had been their thing of joy*’; the verse says.

This patriarchal hegemony is clearly identifiable in the context of Kerala history, as for the lower caste females, concealing their breasts was a taboo. On the other hand, for upper caste females, mingling with the opposite gender had been a reason for getting expelled from their community. If at all *Mohiniyattam* was practised during that time, who were the viewers (consumers) of the entity? From the above mentioned praxis we can lexicalise the takers and connoisseurs of *Mohiniyattam* during that age. To make it concise, women of lower castes were their slaves outside, meanwhile the upper caste women (*Antarjana*) were the slaves inside. Thus, the tool of entertainment for them was women who were available outside the walls of their houses; those were the *touchable-lower castes*.

However, 19th century witnessed the refinement of *Mohiniyattam* in terms of its artistic qualities and status. A specific codified feminine dance form was developed under the patronage of *Maharaja Swathi Thirunal*. Even though the erotic contents were at its peak, the dance form could chisel itself into a systematised music culture. *Swathi Thirunal* enriched this form with the help of prominent artistes of the *Sadir*. The artistic soul of *Mohiniyattam* technique might have taken birth at this point. But that was also a point when the indigenous (*Thanath*)²⁵⁷ music system was eliminated from the art form. This short span of success ended with the demise of *Maharaja Swathi Thirunal*. So, *Swathi Thirunal* could not succeed in attributing this feminine dance form a respectful and appeasing status among the social milieu of that time because, no Travancore rulers, after him, cared to nurture this dance form. Swathi left no disciple to follow up his music legacy except the written compositions. Some of them were found without music notations and ragas. After all, we relate *Mohiniyattam* to Swathi, even though it's not confirmed that Swathi propagated *Mohiniyattam*. He worked with the non-native *Sadir* dancers and musicians. However, Swathi had a great influence on the growth of *Mohiniyattam*. (Refer to the diagram for a chronological root map of *Mohiniyattam*)

Mohiniyattam is undoubtedly a dance form that comes under the genre of 'Kreedaneeyakam'. The purpose of this art form could also be *Hitopadesham* at times. Certainly, this solo feminine art had no connection with any labour-cults. Either in the temple or the mansion settings, it always had a closed set of audience. It had been part of *Aradhana* (worship) under the divine circumstances and eventually the purpose was narrowed down to the stage of *Aswadana* (entertainment) when it was taken to the outer precincts of the temple. Thus, it is quite natural to get the code and the core of the form redefined in accordance with the taste of the male dominated society, since the form is tied up with *Aswadana* alone.

As a result, *Mohiniyattam* could easily develop as a strategic tool in the hands of the middle-class men to persuade the high-class magnates of the society. Soon, it was engaged as a vehicle of monetary and half-marital affairs (*Sambhandham*) of the elites of the society. Some Desi forms which are said to have been performed in the courts and mansions of the aristocrats merely served the voyeuristic purpose which complimented both being-looked at-ness (pleasure in being looked) and to be looked-

²⁵⁷Thanath- Theatre technique developed by Kavalam Narayana Paniker

at-ness (pleasure in looking). One such number was ‘*Mookkutti*’. It was actually a philosophic number that invokes salvation²⁵⁸, but unfortunately this number was manipulated to arouse sexual pleasure in men.²⁵⁹ The dancer would search for the lost nose-pin among the audience and lend them opportunity to see her in close and at the extreme level, she would sit on their laps. Another number in this sort was ‘*Chandanam*’. Here she, herself, would apply sandal oil on the viewers’ body. *Mohiniyattam* had just been a mode of pleasure during this age. Previously, if it was due to the affairs of native landlords, this time it is because of some non-natives, the art form vanished from the social scenario. Thus, the curtain of *Mohiniyattam* was pulled down by the governing body of the British rule to restructure the cultural values.

Mohiniyattam into the Light of Urban-modelling (and Institutionalisation)

“*Pandoru Mukkuvan Muthinupoyi Padinjaran Kattathu mungipoyi*
Arayathipennu Pizhachupoyi, Avane Kadalamma Kondupoyi.
Arayathipennu Thapassirunnu, Avane Kadalamma Konduvannu.”²⁶⁰

The above given verses are from the most celebrated classic film of Malayalam, *Chemmeen* (Based on Takazi’s Novel, *Chemmeen*) released in 1960’s. The verses showcase the essence of Takazhi’s Novel in a nutshell. It was penned in 1960s, but the myth and root of its dichotomy stemmed from its postcolonial aspects. These four-line myth has been the cardinal tenet of the middle-class Malayali mind-set then. Thus, 1930s was undoubtedly a peak time of the emergence of smothering-moral-values among natives. Women lived there by getting re-embodied once again and were recapitulated and categorised into several man-made magnitudes ranging from *Veshya* to *Grehastha*. Both *Smrithi* and *Biblical* rules and conceptions about

²⁵⁸ Nirmala Panikker revived this desi form in *Mohiniyattam* and her perspective and approach towards this form is philosophical.

²⁵⁹ *Mookkuthiyattam*, as Kalamandalam Krishnan Nair recollected his memory about watching Orikaledathu Kalyaniyamma: “the item depicted a dancer who had lost her Mookkuthi (Nose stud), searching for it among the audience. In the course of the search, the dancer would sit on the laps of men in the audience and search for the ornament in their pockets. She would hold her face close to theirs and ask if they had seen her Mukuthi. The item was obscene” (Kalamandalam Krishnan Nair interviewed by SyamalaSurendran & C P Unnikrishnan, 1989: 24).

²⁶⁰ First line: “Once upon a time, a fisher man went for fishing and finally ended in plunging into the depths of sea. His wife was committed adultery; thus, the mother ocean took him away forever.” Second line: “Once upon a time, a fisher man went for fishing and finally ended in plunging into the depths of sea. His wife deeply immersed in penance, thus, the mother ocean brought him back to the shore.”

women were merely akin to her bodily characteristics. Because men did not ever want to be controlled or restricted, they put women's freedom at stake. Religious and moral policies restricted women from active-social-engagements and if they violated these rules, they were tagged as *Veshya*. In the light of the neo-Victorian wisdom and morality, native dominant males made their personal affairs more confidential and regarded all those commitments and engagements as forbidden in the day-light. Unfortunately, *Mohiniyattam* was already polluted under the pleasure-seeking alliances of feudal chieftains. Hence it was soon marginalised as the property of prostitution alone. Embargo of dance (Devadasis) is not a story of the recent-times. For Victorian moral speakers, they had the note of Corinthian's in this regard. In the chapter of the letter of Paul to the Corinthians of Holy Bible, Sacred temple dancing was described, as a sin (Holy Bible New Community, Revised Catholic ed.,2011).

Adair (1992) states:

“The general oppression which women experience in society is continued within dance...Dance production and dance training are inevitably affected by negative attitudes towards the body inherited from the Judaeo-Christian tradition which is a major factor contributing to the marginalization of dance in western society... these attitudes hold the body and sexually to be indecent which in turn affects any expression through the body and hence dance”(p.14).

It was undoubtedly a herculean task for Vallathol to take *Mohiniyattam* from its narrow domain to his just budded institute. Howbeit, being a rebellious revolutionary, he could realize his wish (of implementing a *Mohiniyattam Kalari*) successfully. Even then, he had to compromise upon its repertoire. The common traits of folk elements that were uniformly visible in all the performing art forms in Kerala were thereby wiped out from *Mohiniyattam*. This was obviously a political movement that happened in the due course of urbanizing the dance form. Because it was assumed that the so called polluted erotic contents of the dance form would not have been in that form earlier. As said before, it is the common imprints of folk culture that exist in all performing art forms of the land. However, these *desi* elements of *Mohiniyattam* took rebirth from the frozen phase recently, through the relentless efforts of the *Mohiniyattam* practitioners. But one thing is for sure that the form would not have outlived itself if, Vallathol had not embarked on his explorations. Urbanization of *Mohiniyattam* was a movement that grew with its institutionalization. Vallathol might be the first one to attempt it in *Mohiniyattam*, as he mentored the

work of initial systematisation of the art form under *Kalamandalam Kalari*. Thereby he took out the delicate remaining of the feudal erotica from the art form and re-cultured it on par with the then Malayali idea about woman. After a few steps of growth under institutionalization, *Mohiniyattam* was taken and nurtured under individual artistes. Thus, it widened its horizons in an astonishing manner. Obviously as an art form, the next goal in order was becoming 'Classical'. Following is the perception of what it is to be 'Classical' in dance.

Origin of the Notion 'Classical'

Cambridge dictionary defines the term 'classical' in the context of dance as, "traditional in style or form, or based on methods developed over a long period of time."²⁶¹ It is said and widely believed that, in India, dances started to be labelled under classical, as it was part of a re- invoking²⁶² movement. According to Kalpana Ram, "the nationalist discourse defined the classical as adherence to a specific set of defined principles. *Parampara* or tradition on the other hand, connotes an unbroken, handed-down heritage."²⁶³ It is also believed that this process was to regain the *lost-values* and recondition the wounded Indian ethos (the ethos of the Indian elite) under the British raj.²⁶⁴ Classical, in the Indian context, is a term much closer to the construction of new Indian-ness.

Classicalization of Indian art forms have been to some extent, *Aryanization* of the Indian culture. This movement paved the path for establishing the institutional operandum of Indian dance forms. The political affairs of the colonial and the post-colonial ages played crucial role in remodelling the dance forms and creating something new under the brand of 'Old'. "It is important to accept the notion of the classical as being part of the artistic hierarchy created even within Indian art. Ironically, today we use the Samskritam word 'shastriya' to mean classical.", writes

²⁶¹ Cambridge University Press 2018

²⁶² Even the classicalists of dance think that it was the reawakening of the dying indigenous ethos of an ethnic culture of dance, it was completely not that. When *Sadir* became a classical dance, the form took a sudden leap to the age of Vedas, in order to represent the high-brow spine of the form and discarded most of the values and ethos attached to the form earlier.

²⁶³ Ram, Kalpana. (2011). *Being 'rasikas': the affective pleasures of music and dance spectatorship and nationhood in Indian middle- class modernity*. Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute. Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23011430> Accessed on 3 July 2018.

²⁶⁴ "The *Classicalisation* of art made a specific tradition of art dominant and all other existing traditions of the same art side-lined and devalued." (Sunil P Elayidom, Prof. V. Aravindakshan Smaraka Prabhashanam, 2017.)

the eminent musician and scholar T M Krishna in the context of South Indian Classical Music. It resonates with the notion of Indian classical dance too. To make the then prevalent Desi forms (*Sadir* and so on) classical or elite, they (the then urban-stylists of dance) depended upon Sanskrit and regional textual traditions which uphold likeminded values.²⁶⁵ Hence, connecting these Desi practices to the age old rules of ancient texts made their job easy in decoding them from the suburban roots and Aryanize them.²⁶⁶ Finally, classical dance became a genre of dance that was based on the textual rules.

Performing art traditions of Kerala were deeply influenced by the movement ‘of Classicalization’. Re-invention of those forgotten folk elements are probably complex in the present scenario as the descendants of those classes will not show their own version of the form (*Thiruvathira*) as the form has merged (upgraded) into one (a standardised/ nobilized one) for today’s social scenario²⁶⁷ (Haridas, Interview, Kunnamkulam, 25, May, 2018).

Classicalization also stimulates *Mohiniyattam* to uphold the feudalistic code of standard. As part of the social change, *Mohiniyattam* has also become a *social form*²⁶⁸ (only) during the recent decades. But in the initial years, even the institution accommodated only the students belonging to the upper castes. Disregarding the performing-bodies, *Classicalization* brought the content and setting of the form into purely ‘Aryan’. Hence, as part of *Aryanisation* many students from lower castes also started seeking Classical-dance-learning. This is a fact derived from an observation of the admission-trends in the institute since the day of its establishment. *Classicalization* of art is nothing but ‘Aryanization of the art. Under the democratic society, *Mohiniyattam* has turned into a social entity and became accessible to anyone regardless of any discrimination. But still it has only one phase of existence; that is as in the reminiscences of the feudal age. C Rajendran (1996) has opined that “as far as Kerala was concerned, the general tendency to classify arts into classical and folk is

²⁶⁵ Classicalization of Indian art forms was a necessity of Nationalism during the advent of modernity. It was creating and appraising a new history probably discarding the historicity. (Sunil P Elayidom, interviewed by Sreechithran, CRITIQUE- art and culture, March, 2018)

²⁶⁶ It is a phenomenon in which the “outsider becomes insider”. Sunil P Elayidom observes that how Subbulakshmi immersed with the Aryan ethos while, Pattammal could not exceed that much as an Aryan icon (Sunil P Elayidom, Interview, 24, September, 2016).

²⁶⁷ Kerala Govt. had conducted an art festival title “*Pattika Jaati Pattika Varga Kalotsavam*” in 1991. The mission behind this festival was to reinvent the lost-cultural values of the art forms of the real soil and make them (the respective classes) aware that all the so-called elite art forms of today had emerged out of the soil of this oft-forgotten roots of culture” (Ramachandran Vallyath, 1991).

²⁶⁸ ‘Social form’ in the sense, people of any community can perform it. It became ‘caste-free’.

undesirable. There had been mutual give and take between the two” (Gopalakrishnan,1997:12). It is high time that *Mohiniyattam* dancers and practitioners thought about the strategies and ways for democratising the essence of the form in its true sense without de-culturing or letting the shades of its craft fade. Many elements of native folk culture had been back grounded for the existence of the so-called feudalistic forms of Kerala. Howbeit, no one from the field would wish to acknowledge it.²⁶⁹

Mohiniyattam- Chronological root map

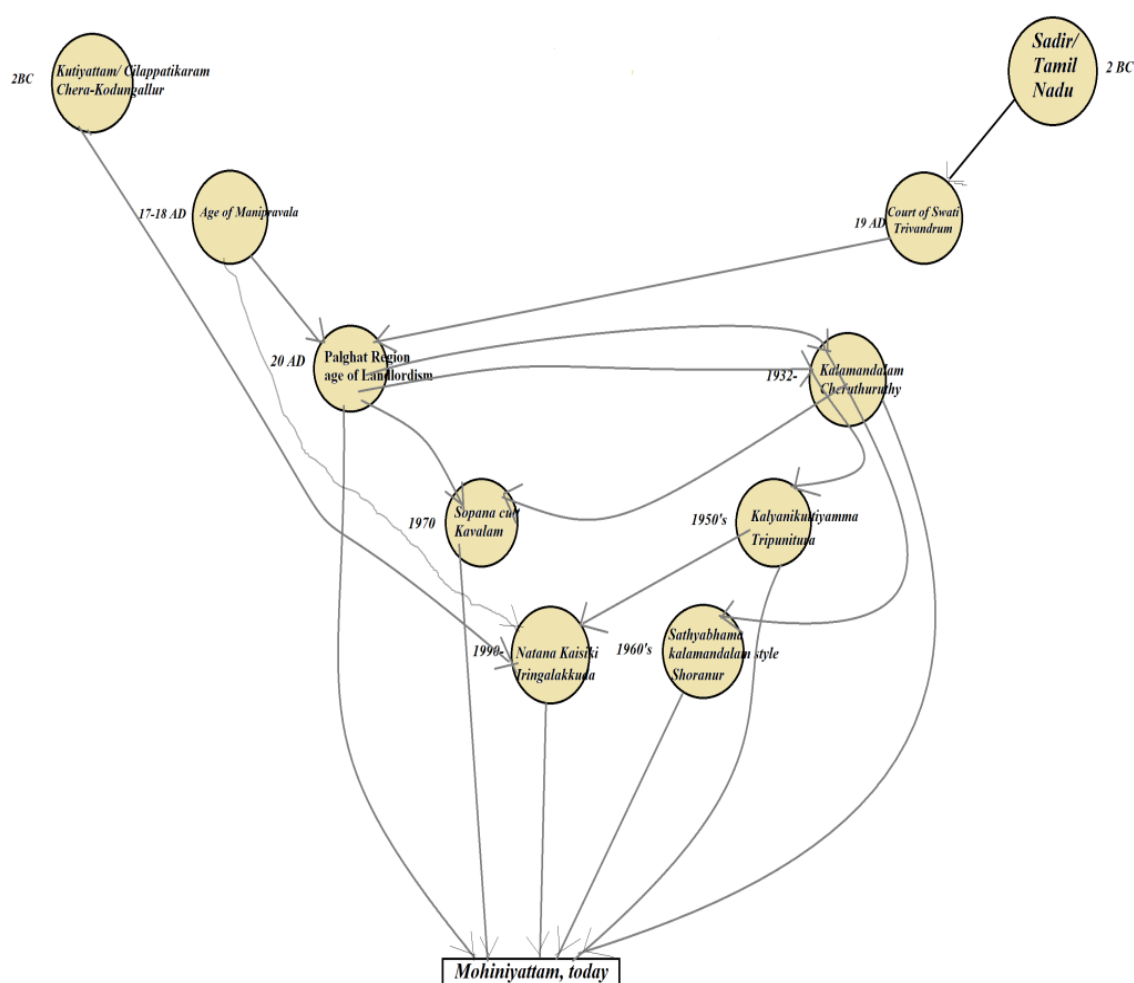


Plate no. 5.22 (Developed and sketched by the researcher)

²⁶⁹ a) T M Krishna (2018) states, “When we speak of Indian culture what do we mean? We have a monolithic view of culture, a majoritarian impression. This has been propagated by generations of social, cultural and political leaders. This is nothing but an upper-caste Hindu notion. We are a country of heterogeneous cultures but we want to confine culture to one trunk. We have already written the rules based on those cultures that belong to our cultural sphere. Others who want to join the party have two options: they either leave behind their own identity or alter their cultural practices to suit the tastes of the owners of this singular culture” (p.22).

b) “The artificial coating of religion and devotional aspects on the art forms that existed since the time of ‘Rigveda’ has to be smashed in order to weave the art-forms into the context of modern thought of humanitarianism. And this is a most important responsibility for the social activists of today” (EMS,1989).

[Diagram note: All these circles are separate entities of different places and times that have played different roles in the growth of *Mohiniyattam*. The loops showcase the connection of the entities with present day's *Mohiniyattam* (developed by the researcher).]

Even though the date and place of origin of *Mohiniyattam* are inaccessible, it is definite that the female dancing tradition had existed. Now, in order to trace its historicity, we try to bridge the un-bridged or put together the broken entities of the past. Thus, it is fair to address all the other former traditions of female dancing of the land, which precede or succeed the medieval textual references of the term *Mohiniyattam*. This above-given root map sketches the connection and the alliances of the past events with present day's *Mohiniyattam*.

Literary sources available

- 1) 2 BC, *Cilappatikaram*, under 2nd Chera Rule: Root of *Mohiniyattam* is found in some *desi* dancing traditions described in the Tamil texts of the Sangam era.
- 2) 17-18 AD *Manipravala eras*: A clan of the native female dancers associated with the temple dancing cult were mentioned in many of the *Manipravala* literature.
- 3) 19 Swati's period (2BC *Sadir*) (*Trivandrum*): Swati made artistic collaborations with non-native *Sadir* dancers and *Nattuvans*. After his demise a *Nattuvanar* who worked with him is said to have moved to Palghat and thus spread his art over there.

Empirical sources available

- 4) 19-20th AD *Landlordism/ Feudalism (Palghat)*: Literary sources produce references about the 20th century dancers and *Nattuvanars* of *Mohiniyattam*. The second novel of Malayalam, (published after 11 months of Indulekha) *Meenakshi* has a chapter about the performance of *Mohiniyattam*.
- 5) 1932 *Kalamandalam (Thrissur)*: Mahakavi Vallathol implemented *Mohiniyattam Kalari* in his institute. Started under the mentorship of Kalyani Amma and Krishna Paniker in 1932. And the *Kalari* proceeded under Thottassery Chinnammu Amma from 1950's. Chinnammu Amma kalari is the base-root of today's *Kalamandalam School*.

- 6) 1950's *Kalyanikuttiyyamma (Tripunitura)*: Kalyanikuttiyyamma established her institute in 1952 at Tripunitura with the novel structure of *Mohiniyattam*.
- 7) Late 1950's *Kalamandalam Sathyabhama (Shoranur)*: Kalamandalam Sathyabhama made further developments in the growth of *Kalamandalam Mohiniyatta Kalari*.
- 8) 1970's *Sopana tradition (Kavalam)*: Kanak Rele and Bharathi Shivaji contributed their work in *Mohiniyattam* with the help of Kavalam Narayana Panikkar. This could be called a predominant phase I in the development of *Mohiniyattam*. They expanded the greatness of the art at the national level, at Mumbai and Delhi respectively.
- 9) 1990's *Natana Kaishiki (Iringalakkuda)*: Nirmala Panikkar established her *Kalari* of *Mohiniyattam* at Iringalakkuda. She brought out a path-breaking contribution to the scenario of *Mohiniyattam* that is nothing but the rediscovery of forgotten Desi aspects of *Mohiniyattam* which were prevalent in the *Manipravala* era.

Dance Teaching in Kerala: Early Phase to Institutionalization

In Kerala, *Puraskaranam* was an early method of educating the young children. It is an apparent form of today's home-tuition-concept but with added value. In this method the teacher could not compromise with the quality of both teaching and the teaching contents, as the teacher stayed and taught at the disciple's residence. The allied procedures like evaluation, assessment and corrections were clearly carried out without procrastinations. This system vanished from the feudalistic art forms like *Kathakali* and *Mohiniyattam* with the decline of landlordism. Other advantages of this system were the limitation of space and the low student-strength in the class. The classes were conducted in a closed setting at the same time it also had an eco-friendly ambience; and the teaching time would be unlimited and there were no limitations concerning the content part.

Dance teaching at the local-level during 1960-80's

prior to 1960's

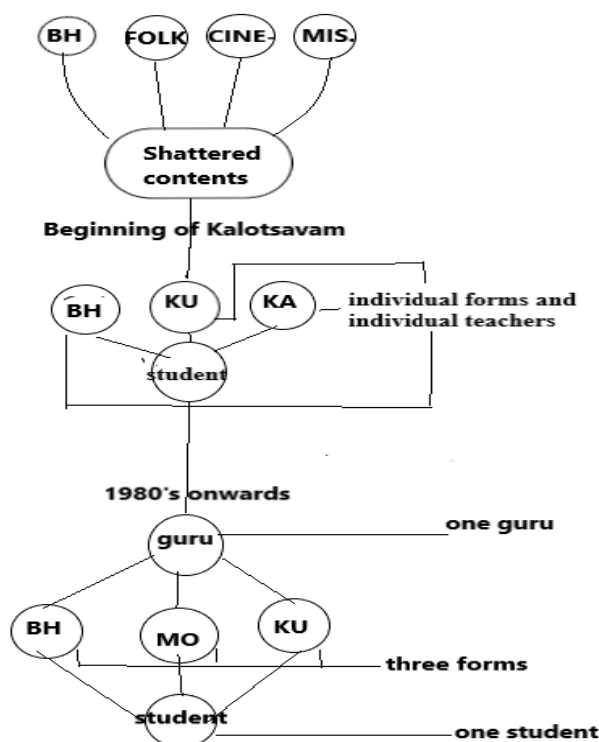


Plate no. 5.23

[Diagram note: The four circles on the top of the diagram are BH-Bharatanatyam, Folk traditions, Cinematic dances and miscellaneous sources. Under that the four loops are connected to the box titled 'Shattered contents' which indicate the inadequacy of learning materials. A line is drawn vertically to connect with the other pattern of pedagogy to show the continuation of the dance learning system. With the commencement of Kerala School *Kalolsavam* in 1950-51, school going dance aspirants started seeking specialised training in individual dance forms. Since then, students started getting trained in individual forms from individual gurus. These students become master teachers in the disciplines in the successive decades. Teaching module of these teachers characterise credentials of multiple genres of dance under one roof.]

This is the pattern of learning dance, popularised among the commoners of the society of that time. In this pedagogical pattern of dance, the teacher would have a partial knowledge of three or more art forms. And she / he prepares the teaching contents according to his or her knowledge on the same. Thus, they could take a few aspects from *Bharatanatyam* and a few from *Kathakali* and also from miscellaneous sources like film songs, folk traditions and so on. His/ her content could thus be assorted in a **fragmented manner**. This pattern was popular in many regions of Kerala until the forms were properly institutionalised.

As said earlier, since the era of *Kalotsavam*²⁷⁰ (1950's), the students had been seeking for specialised training in three or more **individual forms**. By this movement, a generation of quality teachers emerged in the field with thorough knowledge and teaching capacity of three or more individual forms of dance. And from 1980s, teaching **multiple forms** of dance under one roof by a single guru, became a natural phenomenon. This pattern upholds a hybridised value of the form. Commercialization was one definite phenomenon which had a key role in this phase of dance pedagogy in Kerala. This pattern could have been the first-seed of commercialisation of the traditional art forms.

The first institution of *Mohiniyattam* was established in 1930s. For the initial years, the teaching pattern of dance inside this institution was the same as the above discussed trends outside. *Mohiniyattam* was not taught or learnt by any one during that time. By the bygone times of *Puraskaranam* the chapter of teaching *Mohiniyattam* also disappeared from the scenario. However, by 1950s *Mohiniyattam* was structured and systematised under the potency of institution. **Institutional learning** of *Mohiniyattam* has certain characteristics. Even though the institute could revamp the practice and performativity of *Mohiniyattam*, it could not regain the lost values of *Mohiniyattam* teaching of yester years. In institution the teaching contents and time are limited and the principal teachers are assisted by the assistant teachers. Thus, not every student has the opportunity to get trained under the principal teachers of the institute. The ambience was also created in an artificial manner. The variations in the style of the form of each of the teachers affect the uniformity of the institute, and at times it could cause confusion among the students in learning too. In order to replenish the values of dance teaching of yonder days, one needs to check with the credentials of traditional teaching system of dance. Hereunder, the nuances of traditional approach of teaching dance is discussed in a nut shell.

Nuances of the Traditional Dance Pedagogic System

- *Personal presence: Touch, Gesture and Glimpses of masters*
- *Treatment of the novice*

²⁷⁰ Kerala School Kalolsavam: "Kerala School Kalolsavam is a festival unique in its structure and organization. The organizational set-up from school level to state level for the conduct of the Kalolsavam is monitored by Education Department as per the manual drafted by experts in the field" (kite.kerala.gov.in).

- *Student's diet plan*
- *Life-style*

In the dance class room, the minds of the teacher and the student travel in the same boat. Unlike other teaching systems, in physical education, the teacher immediately takes notice of the connectivity issues of the detached oars. Sometimes brief glimpses of the teacher could be strong enough to get these disconnected minds get tied back to the content. Glimpse of the teacher is also helpful to correct the movement patterns of the students. The informal gestures and actions that the teacher renders are of great meaning and importance. They play crucial role in the class room. The teacher enacts the whole thing that is being performed by the students in a brief way most probably with one hand while engaging the other hand on handling the rhythm. He/ she may produce different signs with his body parts in order to guide the student towards the correctness of the movements and expressions. This active method will undoubtedly make a productive learning possible.

Touch of the Guru is an important aspect of the training system of dance. Touch can generate various sorts of stimuli. Touch is a means of communication that could be of motivation, movement correction, emotional support etc. Touch is crucial when the teacher has to correct the body postures of the student and also when punishment is essential. 'Punishment', either physical or verbal has now become a taboo but earlier it was a vital practice. Punishments could deposit a sort of body-memory that helps the learner not to repeat the same mistakes.

Novices follow strict practice and supervision under the masters. Initially, students were not capable of tolerating the training system and it is reported that many students attempted to abscond from the traditional setting of teaching.

Morning Gruel or Porridge with grain as side dish is the main course of the diet chart of the students in *Kalamandalam*. This routine came to be known as *Pattikamthudi Sampradayam* in the history of *Kalamandalam*. It was Pattikamthodi Ravunni Menon Asan who introduced Gruel as the breakfast for *Kalamandalam* students. Morning Gruel has various nutri-facts and its regular consumption will help dancers to balance their body stamina and weight.

Residential learning always demands a patterned and systematic style of living. It could even reflect in the thinking ability of the students. It does not facilitate a fear-free, liberal atmosphere. Relationship of *Guru-Shishya* is deeply connected yet it has a

sort of detachment bound up with fear. 'Asking questions' would be a taboo in this traditional pattern of learning system. This enables the students to grasp the central-core of the craft and form with finesse but for undertaking creative endeavours, he/she has to be free for earning their life experience and embracing their own stories.

Conclusion

This chapter covered a wide spectrum of topics ranging from the technical aspects of *Mohiniyattam* to the graphical understanding of the growth of the art form. This chapter had also unleashed some crucial and rarely-spoken aspects of the form: Movement analysis of *Mohiniyattam* against the cultural backdrop, Circular movements and spirituality, etymology of *Mohiniyattam Adavus*, Influence of other art forms on *Mohiniyattam*, Gender-politics of *Mohiniyattam*, and so on. *Mohiniyattam* technique, *Pakkamelam*, Repertoire and *Aharyam* were also discussed in this chapter lucidly.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

“It is quite common to ask why one should study history, whether to satisfy our curiosity about what happened in the past or to glorify it. I think the study of history will help us address present-day social changes” (Rajan Gurukkal, 2017).²⁷¹

In today's post-modern era, there are umpteenth number of ideologies to regulate and control the society.²⁷² As every social phenomenon is governed by the discourses and ideologies of the respective period, it is impossible to isolate it from its social context. Hence, multiple perspectives and insights are involved in understanding a single phenomenon. For instance, every reading is a political act. One's way of approaching a text may vary from that of the other. An individual's perception of the world depends upon his or her own life experiences and the knowledge he/she has gained so far. It is more or less impossible to learn a new thing without correlating it to the previously acquired experiences. Thus, the history being uttered by most of the scholars is not the same in tune. They have different perspectives and perceptions leading to the emergence of multiple versions of history. Writing and re-writing have been a frequent phenomenon that results from the changing attitudes of the authors and the society. Romila Thaper (2004) observes that the “European ideological attitudes continued to be influential even after Indian scholars began to write, since they often brought in reply to earlier interpretations and were therefore still moulded by them” (p.1).²⁷³ Dance history also has followed the

²⁷¹ This quote is to indicate the fact that history is not ‘his alone’. A history note is valid only when it holds an objective perspective to the past incidents clearly and when it doesn't flip into the notion of any binary and finally when it is capable of being sincere to humankind. Is the dance (*Mohiniyattam*) history written in this objective manner? Had every community who had directly or indirectly influenced or contributed to the growth of the form got acknowledged in any pages of the dance history? No, *Mohiniyattam* has been a feudalistic form ever since its social practice. But, can anyone claim that *Mohiniyattam* has grown to the present status only by clinging on to the cultural values upheld by the so called (its own) community? One may fail at that attempt because, besides there always has been other lives to influence and get influenced with. And certainly, it is natural in a hegemonically-masculine and capitalistic society to ignore acknowledging the inputs of inferiors by superiors. Raising these questions and getting the practical solution is one of the objectives behind the creation of this thesis.

²⁷² “The social class structures are reinforced by the dominant ideology. Usually it is seen that the economically and politically dominant sections of society are generally dominant ideologically. This ideology is powerful and pervasive and frequently not recognized so that the dominant world view is assured to be ‘common sense’ apolitical and beyond challenge” (Adair, 1992:12).

²⁷³ “The historical writings produced by European scholars, beginning in the 18th century was formulated in terms of the ideological attitudes then dominant in Europe, and naturally these were

same path. Different perspectives may be observed in the written accounts of dance history. This thesis has dealt with the discussions on the events happened in the history of *Mohiniyattam* in a phenomenological manner. Before going into the nuances of the concluding chapter, a brief discussion on the relationship of dance and the society is essential.

The major objective of this research was to re-establish the lost connections of this medieval art form with the society and design a proposal for the development of its pedagogy and performativity which is relevant to the existing socio-cultural scenario. In the first part of the thesis, the cultural backdrop and the female lives of Kerala have been discussed in detail. It was to ascertain the essence of the '*Lasya Bhava*' (which is culturally the attribute of 'eros' and 'submissiveness') of *Mohiniyattam* from the cultural context of medieval Kerala. The research deviates from the usual trajectory, in its attempt to trace the attributes of *Mohiniyattam* as a social form and examine the form in the light of humanistic value of ethics and equity all through the study. Hence, the code and chore of *Mohiniyattam* should never be mere entertainment. As a form of 'feminine idea' it could also be subversive and rebellious against the social situations of injustice towards women and other subaltern lives.

The study has attempted to analyse the pedagogic patterns and practices of this form categorising five different phases of its development, i.e. Emergence, Evolution, Royal Patronage, Institutionalisation and Disintegration including two phases of decline. It is observed that the teaching methodology that has been prevailing in this form during the medieval era was different from the later model of institutionalised pattern. The initial model of pedagogy '*Puraskaranam*' has certain characteristics which are absent in the existing system of institutional pedagogy. This study also examines the growth of different pedagogical models evolved in this art form. It includes creative models such as institutional model that is compared to the combinational model of creativity, Hybrid model or Exploratory model of creativity and self-created or transformational model of creativity. The critical scrutiny on these pedagogic frames also helps to discover the qualities and the inadequacies laid in the present educational sectors of this art form. This study also brings forth the critical

significantly different from the indigenous tradition of ancient India. European ideologies entailed a set of attitudes toward India which were for the most part highly critical, though there were also some sympathetic historians. These ideologies continued to be influential even after Indian scholars began to write, since they often brought in reply to earlier interpretations and were therefore still moulded by them" (Thaper,2004:1).

character of the movement pattern and the technique of the form. It is observed that many movement patterns of *Mohiniyattam* such as up and down and side-ways movements of the chest reflects the feudalistic pattern of female lives. Thus, the patterning of *Mohiniyattam* movements occurred as a phenomenon that relates to the female-life of the medieval era and it still persists in the contemporary practice of the form as part of its technique but with some modifications. Thus, the social contexts in which the form existed influenced the movement patterns of the form.

Based on the extensive material collected and information elicited from gurus, scholars, senior performers and young learners, this work offers suggestions to circumvent certain problems or concerns prevalent in the pedagogical and performance arenas of *Mohiniyattam*.

Mohiniyattam is a form that could beautifully absorb the dynamic and novel ideas of any time and space. No other traditions of Indian Classical dance would be able to accommodate things of the contemporary world as much as *Mohiniyattam* could. The peripheral idea of simplicity might be one strong reason for the art form to have this reflective nature. Doubtlessly, the social connection, that this form has could be the one possible reason for this kind of openness compared to other *strictly-Aryanised forms*. A young non-native *Mohiniyattam* dancer who is successful in numerous contemporary experimentations of *Mohiniyattam* responds that “my call of *Mohiniyattam* comes from the essential femininity, it beholds” (Vijayalaxmi, Sahapedia-Interview, Dec, 2016). Especially these non-native dancers brought new colours to the form as they enlarged the langue and parole²⁷⁴ of *Mohiniyatam* far and wide. *Mohiniyattam* can express in any language and is also capable of interpreting human feelings and emotions. Thus, it has now been taken up by a set of enterprising, fear-free, and audience-friendly artistes.

Regarding the pedagogic system, a few concerns are yet to be resolved. They include concerns such as- How many *Mohiniyattam* dancers and stages do we have? What is the overall productivity of the major *Mohiniyattam* institute of the state? Is the curriculum and the syllabi sufficient for the present phase of *Mohiniyattam*?

²⁷⁴ Lang represents the system of language and Parole is the individual performance of that system. In this context, langue of *Mohiniyattam* is the performative system of the art form with all its techniques and repertoire and the parole is the individual expression of the form.

Presently, we have *Mohiniyattam* dancers on stage who experiment on a wide range of topics from Walt Disney's Tom & Jerry²⁷⁵ (work of Kalamandalam Hemalatha, 2006) to the philosophical explications of the form. A significant point worth noting here is that most of these successful artistes of today do not confine to the frames of any Institution. In most instances, these dancers have no history of residential learning too. This reflects the short-coming in the productivity of the residential learning. 'Residential learning' has critical role in the system of traditional dance learning. Institutions like *Kerala Kalamandalam* possess this potentiality. The major agenda of these institutes could naturally be 'the making of a creative artiste'. Providing with the practicability of this '*Sutra*' (strategy) is a mandatory facility that is expected from such *Mohiniyattam* institutes, working under a Govt. Body.

Unlike the former years, today nobody would acknowledge the present learning system of such institutes as '*Gurukula Sampradaya*'. The merit and the advantage of *Gurukula Sampradaya* have faded absolutely into the oblivion. Following are the implications and characteristics of the institutionalised pedagogic system, with its representative differences as *Gurukula* and *Non-Gurukula* systems.

Similarities of the Institutional (residential) Learning to the *Gurukula Sampradayam*

- It was almost similar to *Puraskaranam*. Teacher used to stay at the campus and he/she was always available for teaching necessities.
- *Guru* had crucial role in students' life. Students were monitored in the campus and they had a patterned style of living with certain scripted and unscripted rules and regulations.
- Practical lessons were treated with crucial importance.
- They lived in the art and for the art.
- Severe punishments were part of the training.
- The number of students were remarkably less.
- Emotional bond of the students with their masters and the fellow students was warm and tight.

²⁷⁵ See further details about the *Mohiniyattam* Production 'Tom and Jerry' in "Reinventing *Mohiniyattam*: Dancer to perform Tom and Jerry stories" published in the online news portal of ND TV on 26th May, 2006. <https://www.ndtv.com/video/features/news/reinventing-mohiniyattam-dancer-to-perform-tom-and-jerry-stories-3583>

- They had liabilities and responsibilities towards the institute, even after the completion of the course.
- Students were strictly restricted from taking leave from the class and were not always allowed to stay back home.

The Point of Departure of Institutional learning from the *Sambradaya* of *Gurukula*

- Academics was introduced in the institute.
- Practical lessons were given apparently less importance, under the new academic pursuit compared to the earlier *Sambradaya*.
- Time schedule was changed. Students had to find time for learning other scholastic subjects.
- Students became socially connected and were aware of the social realities to an extent.
- Teachers started staying outside the campus, thus the relation between the student and the teacher became shoddy.
- Teacher was not all the time a committed ‘Guru’ as work became only a duty.
- Punishments were not allowed.
- The number of students began to rise remarkably every year.
- Use of technology had made the existing intact connections lesser important, which was crucial in physical education.

A critical examination of the on-going pedagogic system and its productivity is required to resolve the mushrooming issues and reconstruct the pedagogic system of *Mohiniyattam*. The researcher was fortunate enough to watch the *Mohiniyattam* performance of the students of Post-Graduation of the prime institute for a few years. Over a period of time it is observed that the bodily movements of the performers were often desperately immature and not up to the standard. This indicates the collapse of the performance-competence level of the students to a state of severe vulnerability. Thus, some issues require immediate attention for re-availing the feasibility and the competence of the pedagogic system of *Mohiniyattam*.

Dance comprises three phases of learning. First phase centres on ‘acquiring the primary senses of the dance form along with toning the body to the culture of the

form'. Second phase involves acquiring the intricacies of the *craft* and the *form*. The final phase is to be 'free' as a dancer. It is the last phase that develops the artistry and the creativity of a dance learner. Thus, this phase is to ask, think, and experiment with the art conscientiously.

This native institute of *Mohiniyattam* has different divisions under different grades for learning *Mohiniyattam*. When the schooling system was introduced into the course, the attention towards the art form got affected greatly. Originally, each of these divisions has to be treated as different levels of learning. The first division always needs intensive care and focus as the novices get their first practice in this chamber. The institute has eight divisions or class-rooms now (Number of chambers doesn't matter) to serve this purpose. The first room is to get the body of the novice toned into the culture of the form. The fundamental physical exercise-patterns of the form are introduced in this phase. And it has to be constantly monitored under some potential *gurus*. For any physical art, the fundamental installation of the skill is critical. Thus, the first room has to be treated with much importance. Body-balance and tempo-management of movements have to be acquired at this level. Movements of major and minor limbs have to be cleared at this stage. It is not important how many chapters you have covered, but what matters is 'how did you learn them'. In the second chamber the student has to be introduced into the repertoire of the form, while maintaining the sound practice of the fundamental movement patterns. Once he/she acquires the craft of the form, the teacher can move onto the theoretical intricacies of the form. And finally, she/he has to be free for interpreting the art in accordance with their creative formulas. Raising and resolving questions pertaining to the art form has room from this level onwards.²⁷⁶ This is the ideal design conceived which is not translating into the practice in the institutional system.

²⁷⁶ When we look close into the nuances of the initial training system of the institution which was much akin to the '*Gurukula Sampradayam*', it resembles the intensive training system of martial art traditions. The intricacies of martial art training, depicted in the movie '36th chamber of Shaolin' also has resemblances with the teaching methodology of the performing art traditions of Kerala. The objective of the shaolin monastery in training the martial art could be similar to the physical art training institution of the state. The objective of Shaolin Monastery as the movie depicted is that: "the 36 chambers of Shaolin monastery are places where the Shaolin monastery trained its disciplines. The 36 chambers represent 36 different levels or 36 subjects of martial arts. To leave the Shaolin monastery with the dignity of a graduate, a shaolin disciple must first complete these 36 subjects" (Ali Baba, 2015).

The Institutional Pedagogic System of *Mohiniyattam*: Concerns and Suggestions

“The concept of the teacher is more relevant today than at any other point of time, a declining *guru-sishya-parampara* leading to an increase in the value and volume of teachers” (Ashish Mohan Khokar, 2018:9). This is one of the crucial problems that happens in the field of dance teaching in Kerala, especially at the institutional realms. When dance institutes became affiliated to the UGC, the quality of dance instruction apparently collapsed from the basic level. This problem stems from the complex relationship of dance-craft and dance-scholarship. Today dance instructors are widely appointed in the Universities based solely on their academic and performance competence. What is the exact age of teaching dance or what is the final grade to be qualified as a dance teacher? Surely, practical and theoretical knowledge of dance alone cannot make a competent dance instructor. Thus, the teacher-training is a mandatory aspect in the current scenario of Classical dance, especially when it has been elevated to the academic platform. Unlike the story of the past, people now approach dance from a professional perspective. However academic quality alone cannot fulfil the characteristics of a dance teacher. But a common phenomenon that is observed in many institutes of today is the lack of well-trained teachers. They might be good at performing their school of dance in a finest way. But they are not able to produce results in their students. What do they lack? An interrogation in this regard calls for the necessity of teacher-training in the pedagogic system of dance.

Following tables enunciate certain concerns and suggestions regarding the development of pedagogy, choreographic and performance competence, academics and research of the art form.

6.1 Concern	Suggestion
<i>Dance Pedagogy</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Novices get training under inexperienced junior teachers.• Basics not laid correctly in learning of the skill-oriented art.• Most of the junior teachers appointed for the training of novices are either part time research scholars or internship	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Novices have to get critical attention and they have to be trained under experienced and quality-teachers.• Availability of senior and experienced dance teachers has to ensured professionally.• Teachers’ training programmes

<p>students. (In the prime institute of <i>Mohiniyattam</i> in Kerala)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age of teachers often become barrier when the most potential hands are out of service. • No seminars or workshops have been conducted for the development of <i>Mohiniyattam</i> pedagogy so far under any institutions. • Intake of the students is remarkably on the rise, but this doesn't contribute to the productivity of the institute. 	<p>have to be introduced separately.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A main paper has to be assigned for 'dance pedagogy/ dance-education' in the syllabus of post-graduation. • Seminars and workshops have to be conducted regularly for enhancing the methodology of dance. • Different theoretical frames could be used for the development of a feasible teaching methodology in dance. • Students have to be considered on the basis of their age and standard grades of learning. And accordingly, the methodology of teaching has to be revised.
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6.2 Concern	Suggestion
<i>Choreographic and performance competence</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No proper space for presenting or developing student's ideas in the class room even after years of practical experience. • Students are not allowed or encouraged to take up fresh and relevant themes. • The congested and restricted ambience of the class-setting make the students unoptimistic in their creative endeavours. • There have been no choreographic workshops that could bring out individual choreographies of the students to the public attention. • Gifted students of the institute are often seen, trying hard with green cards and reaching no-where in the dance domain. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choreographic ability of the students has to be specially nurtured from the base level by introducing them to related readings. • Motivational and art-management classes are necessary in the age of the market culture (competition). • Self-esteem and confidence of the students are dealt with attentively. It will make them optimistic and clear about what they produce. • Choreography workshops are to be held under the guidance of veteran artistes and ensure the students opportunities to produce their own works individually. • Gifted students are to be bestowed with opportunities for social debut individually by a selection committee of the institute. New ideas such as setting up finishing-schools and dance management classes should be materialised.

6.3 Concern	Suggestion
<i>Dance- Academics and Research</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A scientific methodology of dance research is yet to develop. • Multidisciplinary approach is crucial in the study of dance and it is missing in the scenario of Indian dance research. • Lacks worthy and productive discussions. Instead of expanding the research and study span, it closes each loop of problems undiscussed. • Members are in most cases, not ready for creative discussions and unwilling to accept novel ideas and approaches. • Considerable attention has not been paid to develop the fresh perspectives and theoretical frames in dance studies: Dance anthropology, Neuro-cognition of dance, study of creative dance pedagogy, choreology, dance-ethnology and so on. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A feasible and broad methodology of dance research has to be developed incorporating ideas of different related disciplines. • Dance students are to be mentored not only by dance teachers but also, by familiarising them with interdisciplinary approaches. It will sharpen their understanding of employing different theoretical frames applicable to their research problem. • The productivity and the result of the dance research seminars and symposiums have to be taken care of. Scholars of different subjects should work together to torch towards new hidden roots in dance research. • Learning is the first step to understand dance. Understanding of dance comes later. Hence a dance student has to be nurtured with other scholarly disciplines to understand dance better and develop dance studies to its fullest sense.

A synthesis of modern and traditional approaches (of dance teaching) is required to develop a feasible teaching methodology in *Mohiniyattam*. Learning dance has different rooms and settings.²⁷⁷ The most fruitful way of acquiring the dance skill is undoubtedly the residential pattern of learning. It facilitates more time and space to practice the form than any other ways. Residential learning could automatically open students' mind and body completely to the environment of dance learning. An effective way is to cluster the proposed learning materials into different levels and modules, according to the age and competence of the student in order to produce good

²⁷⁷ Rooms- intensive learning, stress management learning, learning for competitive purposes etc., Settings- residential learning, institutional-learning, Individual learning, home tuitions, weekend- group classes etc.

results for the institute. Not only the pedagogic realms, but the performativity, performance texts and other closely related aspects of the form also have to be re-thought and revived. It is the responsibility of the present day's performers to reinvent the free-spirited ideas which uphold human value and equity in the realms of the performance traditions of the so-called feudalistic concerns.

Imprints of the Feudal Era

“The privileged community is of the opinion that the art is completely for entertainment and its ultimate dharma is evoking the *rasa* (aesthetic pleasure). They strictly un-allow any realities of human life which belittle the sphere of the so-called aesthetic pleasure enter into the terrain of their artistic field” (Rajagopalan, 2018:75). “Art is subversive, and it is intentional. If art is not subversive, it is dead” says the Carnatic singer-columnist-activist, T M Krishna (2019). These perceptions could be adapted in the realm of *Mohiniyattam*. *Mohiniyattam* is not a dance form that sprang in a single day. It is actually an extended tradition of something which had lesser value in the society.²⁷⁸ Why did it have lesser value? The underlying reason is that not all group of human beings can correlate the experiences of *Mohiniyattam*. It always had selected group of takers. Today however, *Mohiniyattam* has drawn the cardinal attention of the elite aesthetic perceptions of the society. There are many questions and concerns which have to be addressed in the current phase of its performativity. Does *Mohiniyattam* propagate any particular religion other than ‘art’? Does it represent the ethos of any particular religion and community? How far has it been able to respond to the contemporary social issues and problems? If it is a cultural product of the society, then what has it given back to the society? Has it lost its purpose?

Does it exist only to glorify the stories of the yore? These questions make *Mohiniyattam* secluded in the real society of the human. *Mohiniyattam* could be a high-potential medium of human expression when it is free from the attempts of recasting the mundane stories of ‘eros’ and ‘submissiveness’.

²⁷⁸ One can find roots of ancestry wrapped around its (*Mohiniyattam*'s) existence only when he/she turns a phenomenological perspective towards the same. Even the phenomenological survey could have limitations on this subject as it was not directly connected to the day today life of a human being.

Another interesting observation is that, the ideology of the so-called feudalistic mindset always tries to fit the present day's dance forms into the cult of ancient treatises. This has been a major agenda in the movement of classicisation of Indian dance forms. Those who blindly following the performative ideas of these treatises (without contextualising and adding values to them) are not adding anything to the present context of performance arena, rather they just replicate the stories of yore which could be at times irrelevant. Treatises could be used to enrich the vocabulary and not to legitimize the form and limit its creativity. Also, in the present context of academics, one doesn't need to conform to those biased opinions of classic treatises; rather the academics should open up the opportunity and the freedom to question the existing odds of the past.²⁷⁹ What Jean Dreze (well-known Belgium born Indian development economist) says about the plight of political bias in the sphere of academics is relevant in this regard. He says;

“In many disciplines, if you look at the history of ideas, it is essentially ideas that are convenient for the privileged and the powerful that tend to flourish; they are the ones that get sponsored, the ones around which conferences are organised, and so on. In contrast, ideas that are deemed threatening to the established order tend to be side-lined” (Dreze,2018).²⁸⁰

Mohiniyattam can establish its identity in the contemporary world, if only the practitioners and artistes of the field re-establish its values according to the indigenous cult of ‘what it is to be a human being’. Then the form can attain the heights of demonstrating the ‘*agape*’ (selfless love) apart from its mundanely called stature of ‘*eros*’. A point which famous writer and art critic, E P Rajagopalan (2018) puts forward is much relevant in this regard. He quotes Karl Marx, “behind the aura of the so-called ‘Spiritual production’, the elites take art and literature away from its essence of life and via that they make the art as a mere tool of marketism” (Rajagopalan,

²⁷⁹ The well-known art critic Raghava Menon (1991) opined that “the fire and throb of the art lay in its practice and many a great artist had never bothered about haloed treatise which expounded theories. Theorising was not the work of those who propelled by the inner urge to dance or sing. Besides, it was good to remember that all theory came after the practice. Even *Natyasastra* only codified what was already in existence” (Venkitaraman, 1991:17).

²⁸⁰ Some scholars are of the opinion that, in the post-modern era of pragmatism, many ideas which the classical texts of Indian aesthetics (believed to have been the authoritative texts or base texts of Indian classical dance forms) forward are to a great extent irrelevant to the social situation of the present society. As those were written according to the taste and management of the then society, it has to be clearly reviewed and not to be represented as the same by being blind in the society. Thus, no inequalities and discriminations which the Indian classical texts (of dance) demonstrate has to be replicated further.

Dec,2018).²⁸¹ It is much relevant in the case of *Mohiniyattam*. Withstanding all the above discussed paradoxicalities, *Mohiniyattam* is also found being celebrated in the capitalist world of the market trades.

Commercialization of *Mohiniyattam*: Practice and Pedagogy

“*Mohiniyattam* could be slightly indigestible for commoners as it demands sense of aesthetic taste” (Methil Devika, Kaumudi Channel Interview, 25, August, 2018). It could be true. But it raises many questions regarding the fascist mindset of the people who engage in this fraternity. The researcher’s perspective (both as a performer and student of this art form) on this social phenomenon is that, a commoner really can become a good spectator or ‘Rasika’, if s/he is a regular-concert-goer. And no one in this world is born so un-common. It is the world of experiences that makes each person different. This distance of commoners from certain territories of art is actually a culturally-manipulated social behaviour same as in the case of ancient scriptures which are exclusively branded under Hinduism (and kept forcefully away from the subaltern lives). The aura, that today’s skilful *Mohiniyattam* performers attempt to create is that of value and price which is similar to the line of film industry. Thus, the commoners cannot become daily goers of the finest performances of the art form, rather they only get to see the commercialised version of the same. Withstanding these situations, it is hard to expect the ‘*Rasa Aswadana*’ (aesthetic enjoyment and pleasure) from the common man. ‘Commercialization’ and ‘Glorification’ of art becomes common in nature when both of the streams adhere to the monetary aspects.

Interestingly, there are artistes at present who argue over the conventional ideas of *Mohiniyattam* performativity and movement culture. Though these questions have a nature of democratic thinking, fortunately or unfortunately they are the same people who still practice the form in the feudal reminiscences of the past. These arguments also could be a stratagem of the market in this era of digital culture. There are also invalid arguments of such artistes cum scholars that could be cross-questioned at this moment. Commercialization and marketing not only impact upon the performative realm of *Mohiniyattam*, but also the pedagogical arena. Especially in

²⁸¹“From his analysis of the contradictions of capitalism, Marx draws a conclusion which is of extraordinary importance for aesthetics, namely that “capitalist production is hostile to certain branches of spiritual production, for example, art and poetry” (Marx & Engels,1976:21).

the institutional setting, the rise in the enrolment of students indicates nothing but the marketing strategy of the ruling authority. The huge intake of students will affect the productivity of the institute as a whole. The quality of teaching and learning depends upon the thorough ratio of students with appropriate setting and environment. A formal school system follows the ratio of 40 students to one teacher. That is fine for their subject and nature of learning. But in the physical art teaching, individual care is of prime importance. Thus, for one teacher 15 should be the class strength with a practice space of not beyond 1000 square feet. The diagrammatic representation of the same is given below:

The Credentials of *Kalari* (Practice room)

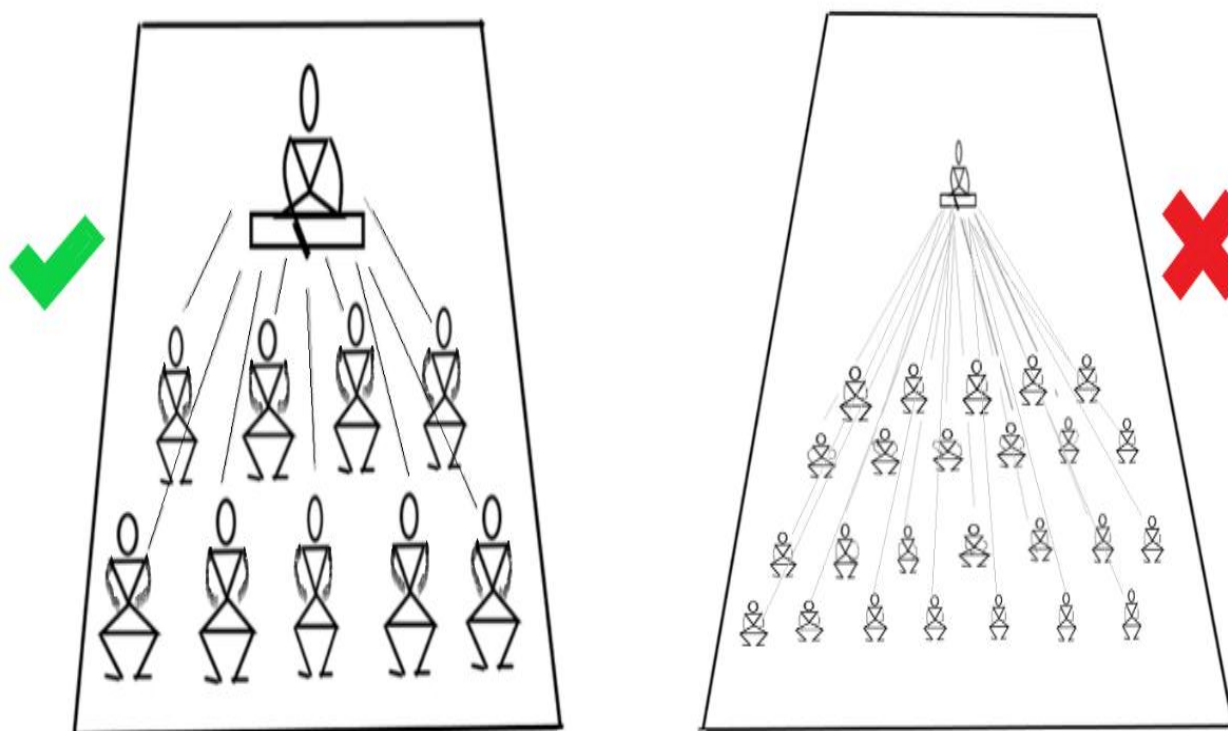


Plate no. 6.1 and 6.2

[Diagram (6.4) note: The first picture comprises the correct manual of teaching dance. There, the class-room-space is not beyond 1000 sqr feet. and the student's ratio is not beyond 15. Students are positioned closer to the teacher.]

[Diagram (6.5) note: This could be wrong for teaching dance. There, class room space is beyond 100 sqr feet. the student's ratio is beyond 15. Students are positioned not closer to the teacher.]

✓ **Diagram 1:**

6.4 Credentials	Advantages
A small class room which is not beyond the width of 1000 sqr feet.	✓ The relationship of the teacher and students gets more intense as they are not positioned at a distance.
Students are positioned closer to the teacher.	✓ The errors of the students could be corrected in a fine manner. Even the minute differences are identifiable in this close ambience.
Class strength does not exceed 15.	✓ Manageable for the teacher to pay individual attention to students.

✗ **Diagram 2:**

6.5 Credentials	Disadvantages
Class room is bigger than the usual one, with a width exceeding 1000 sqr feet.	✗ No rapport between the students and the teacher.
Students are positioned far from the teacher.	✗ Teacher will not be able to correct the movements properly.
Class strength exceeds 15.	✗ It will be difficult for the teacher to focus on the correction of the movements and the students also will not be able to perform accurately.

There are enough areas to be paid attention in renovating the pedagogy of *Mohiniyattam* and recapturing the social relevance of the dance form. The thesis concludes with the introduction of a quality improvement manifesto for the improvement of performativity and pedagogy of *Mohiniyattam*.

Quality Improvement Map for Pedagogy and Performance-Productivity

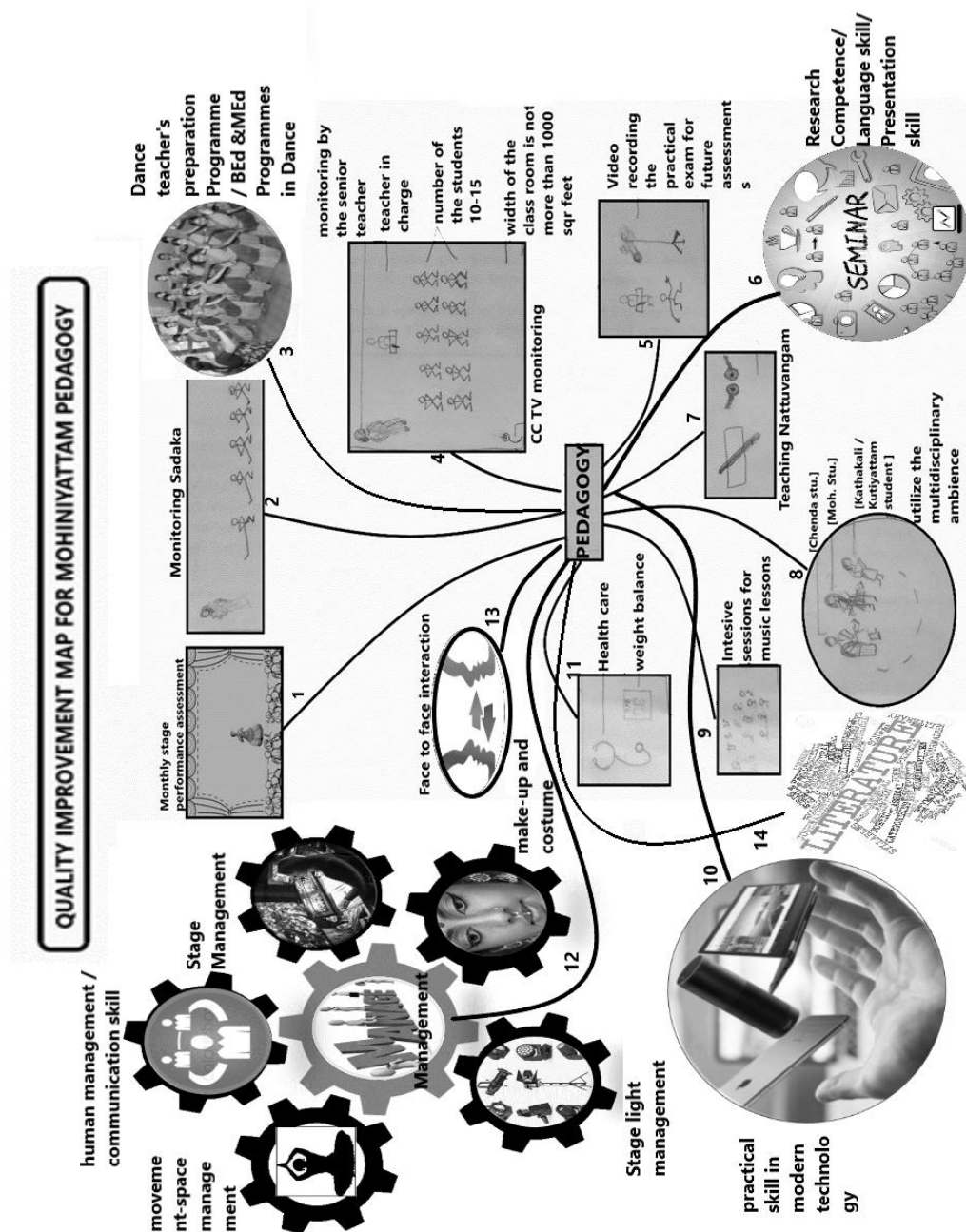


Plate no. 6.3

[Diagram Note: Certain aspects of the ongoing system of teaching has to be improvised for the enhancement of the pedagogy of the art form. The different entities which are corded to

the centre of Pedagogy are the fields that has to be managed appropriately for enhancing dance pedagogy.]

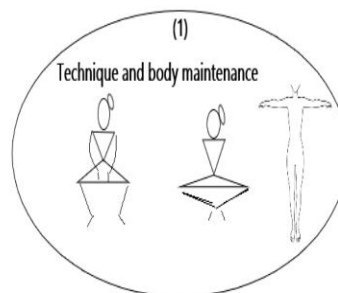
6.6	Idea	Objective	Productivity
1	Monthly stage performance assessment	To assess the growth of performance-competence of the students.	It will enunciate the lacunae and the problems of the students' performance. And according to this development report, the teacher could further help the student to sort out such issues.
2	<i>Sadhakam</i> -Monitoring	To make the students punctual and sincere in regard to the preliminary physical exercises.	There could be tendency for the students to compromise on the <i>Sadhaka</i> practice which is much painstaking. This 'compromising attitude' towards the physical practice will affect the technique and the performance-competence of the students. If a teacher could monitor this session with intense care, it will strengthen the technique as well as the confidence level of the students.
3	Dance teacher-preparation programmes	To affirm about the quality of the teachers.	Teachers' training programmes are necessary for assuring quality teaching in the physical art training centres. Nowadays most of them do not have teaching experience in dance. This aspect (lack of good quality teachers) affects harmfully the productivity of such institutes.
4	Monitoring the practice room	To improve the quality of teaching and learning and also to assure the teaching competence of the teacher and discipline of the students.	Unanticipated visits of senior teachers could help improve the quality of teaching for primary level.

5	Video recording of the practical exams	To assess the growth of the performance and technique competence of the students.	It will provide transparency in the assessment and the marking system of the practical exams. Also helps the student to recognize their lacunae and improve accordingly.
6	Seminars, lectures and other equipment and space for learning.	To improve research competence, language skill and the presentation skills of the students.	Monthly seminars, and lecture demonstrations could help students to improve their academic competence and confidence to manage their performance series independently.
7	Nattuvangam class	It is essential to improve the rhythmic sense in order to compose and choreograph dance pieces without depending upon others.	Nattuvangam class is necessary for a dance student. And it has to be attached to the curriculum with ample importance.
8	Create multi-disciplinary ambience	To improve creativity and thinking aptitude among the students.	The multi-disciplinary ambience provides the students to grow their capacity in adapting and exploring new creative experimentations.
9	Intensive sessions for music lessons	To improve the rhythmic and music sense of dance among the students.	Music knowledge is inevitable for students to practice and experiment dance works.
10	Enhancement of practical skills using modern technology	To use technology as a tool of self-assessment and supplement the pedagogy by using it as an effective tool inside the class,	Will help the teacher to manage classes extensively.
11	Health care and weight balance	To maintain the physical and the mental stability of the students and boost their self-confidence.	Students are to be guided with proper instructions by authentic nutritionists and dieticians.

12	Management skills	Management skills are necessary for dancers. Because they always need to manage the spectators, setting, stage and space so and so, related to the making of their performance. A successful production is a result of the efforts paid in the facets of different management schemes of the performance.	Technical and practical aspects of 'Arts and management' has to be implemented in the curriculum of dance training. It helps talented artistes to cut their way out independently in the competitive sphere of dance- performance and academics.
12.1	Public relations and communication skill	Public performances of dance could not happen without the cooperation of people of the society. Thus, for a performer it is necessary to have a good social skill to manage the people and the setting of the society.	Students need to be promoted to conduct and curate festivals and art programmes at their institutes.
12.2	Stage management	A sense of creative-explorations of stage-setting can help an artiste to present his/her theme of performance more vibrantly to the spectators. it is a necessary skill for the performer to put forth and embark his or her idea on to the stage at the maximal level of its perception.	Students need to be taught both practical and the theoretical nuances of the performance-space. They also have to be given opportunities to work with stage management.
12.3	Make-up and costume	Minimal facial make-up can be done for the performance genre like <i>Mohiniyattam</i> . Yet according to the character, space and setting of the theme, make-up and costume could be cultured. A creative sense of choosing the right appearance format support the performer effectively.	Make-up classes are necessary. And the students are to be taught applying make-up according to the tone, texture and colour of the setting.

12.4	Stage light management	Use of light is an important aspect of any performance genre of today. Natural or technical, light setting is an inevitable part and one must have idea about the utilisation of proper light according to the scenographic nature of the performance.	Lighting is a very important, but is often a discarded aspect in a dance stage. light sense is an essential quality to be manifested among the learners of dance.
12.5	Movement-space management	To encourage the choreographic potential in the student with innovative ideas of space utilisation.	It will enable the performer to explore her creative ideas in accordance with the body, movement and stage spaces.
13	Face to face interaction	To transfer the true essence of the art form directly to the student from the Guru. It is a mandatory aspect related to the learning of physical art.	It will enhance the performance-competence of the student.
14	Literature	To enhance the creative embellishments of dancers and inculcate interpretative skills of the dancers by reading and discussing literary texts of various genres.	It opens up the creative input of a dancer and help her to think of innovative and unexplored ways in the area of dance choreography and production.

(6) Flexibility and Applicability: performance as product and process & as protest and resistance art



PERFORMANCE PRODUCTIVITY



(4) Social Commitment



(3)

Visibility and Dissemination of the performance: Promo, Brochure, press reviews, documentation etc.

Plate no. 6.4

[Diagram Note: The different entities which are corded to the centre of Performance-productivity are the fields that have to be managed and maintained appropriately for enhancing the productivity of the performance. It will also bring social relevance to the form of art.]

- 1) **Finesse of technique and body maintenance:** The body and the performance technique of the performer needs to be toned and polished in order to develop as a strong medium of artistic communication.
- 2) **Theatre technique: adaptability of light, music, sound and other properties:** Capability and creative skills in exploring practical ideas of theatre techniques such as the utilization of light, music and sound designs, enable the artiste to convey his or her idea to the fullest.
- 3) **Visibility and dissemination of the performance: promo, brochure, press-reviews, and documentation:** Public attention is necessary for the performance

to get the spectator-support. Interestingly made promos and brochures of the programme help to access public attention and assure the reach of the art work.

- 4) **Social commitment of the performer:** Performer needs to be committed to the well-being of the society, in order to make meaningful and productive art pieces. Hence, his/her art will reach a wider audience and he/she will be able to make meaningful changes in the society.
- 5) **Thematic relevance: the ultimate aim of the dancer:** Contemporary themes need to be addressed in the performative realm of *Mohiniyattam*. It could make *Mohiniyattam* relevant in the social milieu.
- 6) **Flexibility and applicability:** Freedom and flexibility needs to be ensured in the expressions of the form. Performance approaches of *Mohiniyattam* can be product as well as process oriented. It could be utilised as a strong medium of protest and resistance against the social evils.

Art is not intangible. It grows and adopts various shapes in accordance with the changing patterns of human life. However, there are certain ideologies developed in the society over a period of time, which make some expressions of art firm and fossilised (to an extent). One cannot predict the sustainability of an art form, it varies in accordance with the changing contours of time.

The following is a brief presentation of the suggestions that haven't been addressed or inculcated by the art institutions of the present time. There are three levels of considerations- policy level: implementation of policies in the structural development of the institute; performance level: implementation of various programmes and activities for grooming young artistes; philosophical or trance level: helping the students to impart a world view and to build his or her own artistic self.

6.7 Development strategy					
1) Policy Level		2) Performance Level		3) Philosophical Level	
Structural implementation of the code and conduct. (Development of infrastructure facilities)		Grooming up the attitude and the aptitude of the students		To develop into the state of trance	
1)	Constant monitoring	1)	Workshops and activities for culturing the behaviour of	1)	Inculcating the quality of Reverence and self-

			students		discipline
2)	Health centre	2)	Grooming for health maintenance	2)	Quality of Acceptance
3)	Anti-Discrimination cell ²⁸²	3)	Workshops and seminars for developing creativity and performance competence of the students	3)	Development of world view
4)	Gender Sensitization Committee Against Sexual Harassment ²⁸³	4)	Opportunity to perform on prestigious stages, festivals etc.	4)	Development as a complete artiste and human being
5)	Practice-room with appropriate floors (wooden, mud etc)	5)	Student / scholar exchange programmes at national and international level.	5)	So, on
6)	Digital archives of performance and library for art and literature	6)	Short-term and long-term residential learning programmes with veteran Gurus (Art residencies)	6)	-
7)	A smart room for screening the archived performances	7)	Collaborative productions with various art institutes and organisations	7)	-

²⁸² Article 14 and 15 of Indian Constitution protect people of this land from discriminations and harassments based on any of their diversities. This is a mandatory aspect that is to be followed strictly in every space and context from the households to the Governmental and non-governmental bodies of institutions of our country. This aspect has great relevance regarding the procedure and practice of the art-education institutions. This is the time to recheck the ethical practices of such institutions of our nation. The gender, race, caste, body-bullying and discrimination are evidently active in the terrain of dance training institutes of the state.

The confidential approaches of ethnographic study helped the present researcher to find the attributes and proof of such harmful practices that takes place inside the circle of such institutions.

Traces of such Discriminations and Partiality (Favouritism):

- The authorities select fair and good-looking students for the leading characters in the dance-productions of the institute even if they lack performance competence.
- The students with dark complexion are often removed from the major roles of performance.
- Race, caste, body- bullying is active invisibly in all sides of the institution.
- Cliched prepositions are there regarding the height, weight and the skin colour. Such cliched prepositions do not have any role in the modern system of education where education is free and non-biased.
- The real talent has to be rewarded irrespective of caste, creed and race.

This crisis has to be sorted out for making the atmosphere of education more congeal and stress-free. A grievance cell has to be constituted within the institute for internal retrospection regarding the complaints about various discriminations.

The performativity of the form also has to be revitalised in terms of its connectivity to the contemporary world. Because there will soon be a time for restructuring the total platform of Indian Academia in order to secure it from falling into the realm of religious-blindness.

²⁸³ GSCASH is established in many educational sectors as per the legal policies of Govt.

The present work could be developed further to bring into light the unexplored areas such as *Mohiniyattam* diaspora, changing gender-roles in *Mohiniyattam* and so on. It is evident that since the last decade, *Mohiniyattam* is reaching a larger audience in the diaspora. Native, non-native, and foreign dancers are seen productively utilising this performance-language in the foreign land. However, in majority of the cases, it is market-oriented. There are abundant research possibilities hidden in this area. Also, changing gender roles in *Mohiniyattam* is an emerging sign of the out-growth of its usual gender-concerns. It could be also noted as a bold attempt of artistes, liberating the patriarchal ties of the gender. However, changing attitudes and characteristics of this feminine dance form when it transits to the male body is a critical point to be scrutinized. The present work does not deal with these aspects as it could be another broad area that exists in the present scenario of *Mohiniyattam*. However, such transformations, and adaptations have to be accepted and embraced to make the art form strong and boost its social relevance.

Art is not for merely art's sake. When it is staged publicly, it is for the people's sake. And now, *Mohiniyattam* no more belongs to any particular group of people. It is a socialised expression under the apparatus of our democratic system of education, where the logic of inclusion works. Thus, it no longer supports any symbols, ideas that belong to a selected religion / region of people.

‘Knowledge system, regardless of any region or religion, when tied under the official system of academia, it becomes accessible for anyone without any binary concerns. Let the doors and windows of this genre be wide open so that the fresh air of new artistic creations enriches it. Let there be a room for multidisciplinary approach and open access to transform this art form from the individualistic dominance into an all-inclusive and liberated one. As *Mohiniyattam* has essentially been a female expression, it has to be transformed into a strong medium for the purgation of female emotions and suppressions and that could be the social relevance of this art form. Ultimately, that is what the contemporary society demands from the meadows of this art form.

“While respecting the past we need to look at it with a critical eye and try to make things better. We do not reject history and tradition but to situate it into the context of contemporary time.” (Eave Antilla 2012. Stockholm.)

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Appendix No. 1

GLOSSARY

Appendix 1A: Frequently used technical terms and nouns in *Mohiniyattam*

<i>Sr. No.</i>	<i>Term</i>	<i>Transliteration</i>	<i>Translation</i>	<i>Contextual Meaning</i>	<i>Application of the term</i>
1	<i>Abhinayam</i> (Skt .)	<i>Abhinayam</i>	<i>Leading-toward</i>	<i>Acting / Histrionics</i>	<i>Caturvidhabhinaya, four types of Abhinaya, Angikam, Vachikam, Aharyam, Swathikam</i>
2	<i>Achadakkam</i> (<i>Mal.</i>)	<i>ACcadaKam</i>	<i>Discipline</i>	<i>Modesty towards the tradition</i>	<i>Maturity in dance movement and expressions. Also implies to stick on to the rules and the principles which already exists.</i>
3	<i>Adanta</i> (<i>Mal.</i>)	<i>Atantah</i>	<i>Name of a tree/ Name of a slow paced rhythmic cycle</i>	<i>Name of a desi tala</i>	<i>A Desi (regional) tala (rhythmic pattern) often used in Mohiniyattam</i>
4	<i>Adavu</i> (<i>Mal.</i>)	<i>Adavu</i>	<i>Idea, Style of practice, an action of defence, Dance- Step</i>	<i>Foot-step</i>	<i>Fundamental/ Preliminary steps in dance vocabulary</i>
5	<i>Adhomugham</i> (<i>Skt.</i>)	<i>AdhOmukham</i>	<i>Facing down</i>	<i>Bodily Movement</i>	<i>Part of Angikabhinaya (Gestural acting) either with neck or with eyes</i>
6	<i>Adithara</i> (<i>Mal.</i>)	<i>AdiTara</i>	<i>Base stone / Skelton</i>	<i>Fundamental idea</i>	<i>Fundamental Principle of the form</i>
7	<i>Agragam</i> (<i>Skt.</i>)	<i>Agrakam</i>	<i>On the edge</i>	<i>Pada Bheda (foot movement pattern)</i>	<i>Soft dragging movement of the toes.</i>

8	<i>Agratala Sancharam(Skt .)</i>	<i>agratala sancharam</i>	<i>Movement of the toe of the feet</i>	<i>A Paadabheda</i>	<i>Fast-paced movement with Agratalapada</i>
9	<i>Agratalam(Skt.)</i>	<i>Agratalam</i>	<i>Pointy end</i>	<i>A paadabheda</i>	<i>Heels up while sitting Aramandi (See aramandala) on the forepart of the foot.</i>
10	<i>Aharyam(Skt.)</i>	<i>AhAryam</i>	<i>Artificial/ Capturing</i>	<i>Costume</i>	<i>Costume, Make-up and stage setting</i>
11	<i>Akakkannu(Mal.)</i>	<i>AkaKannu</i>	<i>Inner-eye</i>	<i>Inner Conception</i>	<i>Inner conception of the performance text</i>
12	<i>Akam(Mal.)</i>	<i>Akam</i>	<i>Inward</i>	<i>Inner portion of the building</i>	<i>Sanctorum of the temple</i>
13	<i>Alidam(Skt.)</i>	<i>AlIdam</i>	<i>Polished</i>	<i>Stance</i>	<i>From Aramandalam one leg is stretched back, keeping its toe touches the floor and the heels up.</i>
14	<i>Alolitam(Skt.)</i>	<i>AlOlitham</i>	<i>Little shaken</i>	<i>Circulation</i>	<i>Circulation movement of the upper torso</i>
15	<i>Amarannirikkuka(Mal.)</i>	<i>AmarNiriKuka</i>	<i>Sit thoroughly</i>	<i>Basic stance</i>	<i>Proper execution of Aramandalam in Mohiniyattam</i>
16	<i>Angam(Skt.)</i>	<i>Angam</i>	<i>Body parts/ acts of theatrical play</i>	<i>Limbs of body</i>	<i>Limbs of the dancing body</i>
17	<i>Angikam(Skt.)</i>	<i>Angikam</i>	<i>Bodily expression</i>	<i>That being expressed through the movements of limbs</i>	<i>Angikabhinaya is the first one, out of the four folds of Abhinaya of Indian classical dramaturgy.</i>

18	<i>Angyam(Skt.)</i>	<i>Angyam</i>	<i>Gesture</i>	<i>Gestural expression</i>	<i>Gesticulation</i>
19	<i>Anjali(Skt.)</i>	<i>Anjali</i>	<i>Salutation/ A vessel</i>	<i>A hand gesture, of expressing welcome posture</i>	<i>Hand gesture in Mohiniyattam; held with palms closed together</i>
20	<i>Anjitam(Skt.)</i>	<i>Anjitham</i>	<i>Bent</i>	<i>Paadabheda</i>	<i>Heels on the ground and forepart of the foot being raised up</i>
21	<i>Antolanam(Skt.)</i>	<i>AntOlanam</i>	<i>Swinging</i>	<i>Circular Movement pattern</i>	<i>Circular movement</i>
22	<i>Ara(Mal.)</i>	<i>Ara</i>	<i>Waist/ half</i>	<i>A body limb, waist</i>	<i>Waist</i>
23	<i>Aramandala(Skt.)</i>	<i>Aramandala</i>	<i>A stance</i>	<i>A major stance in classical dance</i>	<i>Half Sitting posture in Vaishnavam see (Vaishnava)</i>
24	<i>Aravindam(Skt.)</i>	<i>Aravindam</i>	<i>Lotus</i>	<i>Lotus-Arrow of Cupid mentioned in Indian Hindu Mythology</i>	<i>One of the five arrows of Kamadeva (Cupid)</i>
25	<i>Ardhachandran(Skt.)</i>	<i>Ardhachandran</i>	<i>Half moon</i>	<i>A hand gesture mentioned in Hasta lakshanadeepika</i>	<i>Gesticulation of half-moon, keeping the thumb finger in distance, articulated through Hamsapaksha mudra</i>
26	<i>Asamyuktahastam(Skt.)</i>	<i>Asamyuktahastam</i>	<i>Separated hand gestures</i>	<i>Single hand gestures</i>	<i>Hand gestures executed with one hand.</i>

27	<i>Asan(Mal.)</i>	<i>AshAn</i>	<i>Master</i>	<i>Master</i>	<i>Traditional way of addressing theTeacher</i>
28	<i>Asokam(Skt.)</i>	<i>AsOkam</i>	<i>Lack of sorrow/ A flowering tree</i>	<i>Flower of arrow of Cupid</i>	<i>One of the flower arrow of the Cupid</i>
29	<i>Ashtapadi(Skt.)</i>	<i>ashtapadi</i>	<i>A Sanskrit Kavya / wild Jasmine</i>	<i>Sanskrit Kavya written by Jayadeva</i>	<i>Sanskrit Kavya, Geetagovindam, a product of Bhakti movement which has eight padams in each song.</i>
30	<i>Atbhutam(Skt.)</i>	<i>atbhutham</i>	<i>astonishment</i>	<i>A rasa (sentiment)</i>	<i>Eighth rasa of Nava rasas. Atbhutam means astonishment.</i>
31	<i>Athibangi(Skt.)</i>	<i>athibhangi</i>	<i>atibhangi</i>	<i>Side deflection of body mentioned in Bhalaramabharatham</i>	<i>Atibhangi is side deflection of waist beyond the natural extent. It is mentioned in the ..th century text of Balarama Varma</i>
32	<i>Attam(Mal.)</i>	<i>Attam</i>	<i>Play/Movement/Fickleness/ Swinging/ Swaying/ , Dancing/ Grinding/ Crushing</i>	<i>Dancing</i>	<i>Dancing, Suffix of the term Mohiniyattam</i>
33	<i>Ayatham (Skt.)</i>	<i>Ayatham</i>	<i>Lengthiness</i>	<i>Stance</i>	<i>From Sama posture one knee bended and hip raised towards the side.</i>

34	<i>Ayavu(Mal.)</i>	<i>Ayavu</i>	<i>To set aloose</i>	<i>flexibility</i>	<i>Ayavu is a body skill that is acquired through the thorough practice of Mohiniyattam Ullachil. Ayavu is more important to showcase the waist and upper torso movements of Mohiniyattam.</i>
35	<i>Bhandu Hastam (Skt.)</i>	<i>Bhanduhastam</i>	<i>Gestures that indicate relatives</i>	<i>Gestures that indicate family relatives</i>	<i>Mudras which represent close relatives. 10 in number. (Father, mother, elder brother, younger brother, elder sister, younger sister, husband, wife, boy and girl.</i>
36	<i>Banam(Skt.)</i>	<i>BAnam</i>	<i>Arrow</i>	<i>Arrow</i>	<i>Arrow</i>
37	<i>Bhayanakam(Skt.)</i>	<i>BhayAnakam</i>	<i>Dreadful</i>	<i>Sixth rasa of Navarasa.</i>	<i>A rasa (sentiment) state of being frightened.</i>
38	<i>Bheebatsam(Skt.)</i>	<i>BhEbatsm</i>	<i>Disgust</i>	<i>Seventh rasa of Navarasas.</i>	<i>A rasa (sentiment) facial expression that shows hesitation, aversion, fear, disgust</i>
39	<i>Bramaram(Skt.)</i>	<i>Bramaram</i>	<i>Honey Bee/ dizziness/ giddiness. potter's wheel</i>	<i>A hand gesture</i>	<i>Hand gesture shows Honey bee and vehicle</i>
40	<i>Brukarmam(Skt.)</i>	<i>BhrUkarmam</i>	<i>Movement of the eyebrows</i>	<i>Movement of the eyebrows</i>	<i>Movement of the eye brows</i>

41	<i>Chamayam(M al.)</i>	<i>Chamayam</i>	<i>Adornment</i>	<i>Costume and make up</i>	<i>Costume and make up for the performance</i>
42	<i>Chapu (Tamil.)</i>	<i>ChApu</i>	<i>A tala category of Carnatic music system</i>	<i>A tala that has two divisions</i>	<i>A Tala that showcases the beats according to the gaits of the tala without showcasing the tala-angas</i>
43	<i>Charanam(Skt.)</i>	<i>Charanam</i>	<i>Feet, step, end part of song</i>	<i>End part of the song</i>	<i>End part of the kriti.the other parts are pallavi (first stanza), anu pallavi (second stanza) etc.</i>
44	<i>Chari(Skt.)</i>	<i>ChAri</i>	<i>Walker/ servant/ wayfarer</i>	<i>Movements of lower limbs</i>	<i>Movement of the feet</i>
45	<i>Charichil(Mal.)</i>	<i>Charichil</i>	<i>Swaying aside</i>	<i>Side to side movement</i>	<i>Side to side movement. Especially of the upper torso.</i>
46	<i>Chatam(Mal.)</i>	<i>ChAtam</i>	<i>To jump</i>	<i>Jump</i>	<i>Jumping slightly</i>
47	<i>Chavittu(Mal.)</i>	<i>Chavittu</i>	<i>Kick/ foot step</i>	<i>Tapping of the feet</i>	<i>Tapping of the feet</i>
48	<i>Chilanka(Mal.)</i>	<i>Chilanka</i>	<i>Anklet bells</i>	<i>Anklet bells</i>	<i>Anklet bells worn by the dancer</i>
49	<i>Chita(Mal.)</i>	<i>Chita</i>	<i>Rule</i>	<i>Traditional rules</i>	<i>Traditional system of practice</i>

50	<i>Cholkettu</i> (Mal.)	<i>cholkettu</i>	<i>Knot of syllables</i>	<i>Knot of syllables</i>	<i>Introductory item in the repertoire of Mohiniyattam. this item showcases the different pattern of Mnemonic syllables in Mohiniyattam with a praise-note at the end.</i>
51	<i>Chollu</i> (Mal.)	<i>Chollu</i>	<i>Uttering/ beauty/ fame</i>	<i>Syllable</i>	<i>Syllables that are incorporated in the dance numbers. two sorts; Mnemonic and percussional.</i>
52	<i>Chutam</i> (Skt.)	<i>ChUtam</i>	<i>Flower of the Mango tree</i>	<i>Arrow of cupid</i>	<i>Mango-flowered-arrow of Kamadeva (Cupid)</i>
53	<i>Chuvad</i> (Mal.)	<i>Chuvadu</i>	<i>Foot/ a measure with the foot</i>	<i>Foot movement of the dancer</i>	<i>Dance step</i>
54	<i>Chuvadu Sathakam</i> (Mal.)	<i>chuvadu sAdhakam</i>	<i>Practice of the foot work</i>	<i>Practice of the foot work</i>	<i>Continuous practice of foot movements in four paces. Especially the first Chavittu adavu.</i>
55	<i>Chuzhipu</i> (Mal.)	<i>chuzhippu</i>	<i>Circulation</i>	<i>Circular and twist-exercise of the body.</i>	<i>Chuzhippu is a major characteristic of Kahakali; Mohiniyattam dancers practice this movement subtly.</i>
56	<i>Cilappatikaram</i> (Tamil)	<i>Cilappatikaram</i>	<i>Story of Anklet, A tamil</i>	<i>Great sanga kavya written by Ilanko</i>	<i>The types of dances prevalent at</i>

			<i>Sangam poetry</i>	<i>Atikal</i>	<i>that period especially under Chera rule is mentioned in this work.</i>
57	<i>Dakshina Parswa(Skt.)</i>	<i>Dakshina parshwa</i>	<i>Facing the south</i>	<i>A chari movemnt</i>	<i>A chari movement which is practiced in Mohiniyattam</i>
58	<i>Damba(Skt.)</i>	<i>Damba</i>	<i>A term</i>	<i>Adavus which resembles Veera rasa</i>	<i>Adavus that are a bit masculine and express veera rasa.</i>
59	<i>Dasavatara Hastam(Skt.)</i>	<i>dasavatAra hastam</i>	<i>Hand gestures to show ten incarnations</i>	<i>Hand gestures to envisage lord Vishnu's ten incarnations</i>	<i>Dasavatara hastas are Matsya, Koorma, Varaha, Narasimha, Vamana, Parasurama, Sree Rama, Balarama, Sreekrishna, Kalki etc.</i>
60	<i>Dehachalanam (Mal.)</i>	<i>Dehachalanam</i>	<i>Body movement</i>	<i>Body movement</i>	<i>Body movement of Mohiniyattam is soft and breezy.</i>
61	<i>Desi(Mal.)</i>	<i>Desi</i>	<i>Regional</i>	<i>Regional variation of something</i>	<i>Regional adaptaion of a practice</i>
62	<i>Devahastam(Skt.)</i>	<i>Devahastam</i>	<i>Hand gestures to show Gods</i>	<i>Hand gestures to show gods and goddesses</i>	<i>Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Saraswati, Parwati, Lakshmi, Ganapati, Indra, Muruka Varuna, Vayu, Yaman etc.</i>

63	<i>Dharmi(Skt.)</i>	<i>dharmi</i>	<i>Actor/ Lord Vishnu</i>	<i>Mode of presentation</i>	<i>There are two modes of presentation of an art mentioned in Natya Sastra. Natya Dharmi (Stylised and sophisticated style of presenting an art), Loka Dharmi (realistic way of presentation with no sophistication added)</i>
64	<i>Dolanam(Skt.)</i>	<i>Dolanam</i>	<i>Swaying</i>	<i>Sway Movement</i>	<i>Sway movement of the body</i>
65	<i>Drishti(Skt.)</i>	<i>Drishti</i>	<i>Eye/ look</i>	<i>Movement and positioning of eye ball</i>	<i>Movement of the eye ball</i>
66	<i>Dikk(Mal.)</i>	<i>Dikk</i>	<i>Direction/ number '10'</i>	<i>direction</i>	<i>One direction out of the eight corners</i>
67	<i>Druta(Skt.)</i>	<i>Druta</i>	<i>Speedy/ melted/ withered</i>	<i>A fast movement</i>	<i>A chari movement</i>
68	<i>Drutam(Skt.)</i>	<i>Drutam</i>	<i>Speedily</i>	<i>A fast paced movement</i>	<i>A fast paced movement</i>
69	<i>Dwibangi(Skt.)</i>	<i>Dwibhangi</i>	<i>Deflection of two sides</i>	<i>Deflection of the body</i>	<i>Two side-deflection of the Body mentioned in Balaramabhar atam</i>
70	<i>Dwiparswa(Skt .)</i>	<i>DwipArswa</i>	<i>Two sides</i>	<i>Body movement</i>	<i>A Chari movement</i>

71	<i>Ettu Varaykkal(Mal .)</i>	<i>ettu varaykkal</i>	<i>Drawing eight</i>	<i>movement</i>	<i>Drawing the shape of eight with the upper torso. This is a characteristic movement pattern of Mohiniyattam</i>
72	<i>Gajagati</i>	<i>Gajagati</i>	<i>Gait of an elephant</i>	<i>Foot movement</i>	<i>A Padagati which resembles the walk of an elephant</i>
73	<i>Galam(Skt.)</i>	<i>Galam</i>	<i>Neck/ throat</i>	<i>neck</i>	<i>Neck</i>
74	<i>Gamanam(Skt.)</i>	<i>Gamanam</i>	<i>Walk / movement/ course/ to go on</i>	<i>gait</i>	<i>Gait</i>
75	<i>Ganapati(Skt.)</i>	<i>Ganapati</i>	<i>A hindu god</i>	<i>A dance number of Mohiniyattam</i>	<i>The invocatory piece of Sopana tradition of Mohiniyattam repertoire</i>
76	<i>Garudanila(Skt.)</i>	<i>Garudanila</i>	<i>Stance of the Brahmany Kite</i>	<i>A Paadanila</i>	<i>A stance or position of the feet</i>
77	<i>Gati(Skt.)</i>	<i>Gati</i>	<i>Gait</i>	<i>Stage walk</i>	<i>Stage walk of the character</i>
78	<i>Gramyam(Skt.)</i>	<i>GrAmyam</i>	<i>About the village</i>	<i>unsophisticated</i>	<i>Colloquial usage</i>
79	<i>Guru(Skt.)</i>	<i>Guru</i>	<i>Master/ chief/ denoting a long vowel sound</i>	<i>Teacher</i>	<i>Teacher</i>
80	<i>Hamsapada(Skt.)</i>	<i>HamsapAda</i>	<i>Feet of a swan</i>	<i>A Padagati</i>	<i>Forepart of the foot touches the floor subtly and moves the foot forward</i>

					<i>with both the foot.</i>
81	<i>Hamsapaksham(Skt.)</i>	<i>hamsapaksham</i>	<i>wings of swan</i>	<i>A hand gesture</i>	<i>A Hand gesture from the Hastalakshana Deepika.</i>
82	<i>Hamsasya</i>	<i>HamsAsya</i>	<i>Face of swan</i>	<i>A hand gesture</i>	<i>A hand gesture from the Hastalakshana Deepika</i>
83	<i>Hasta Lakshana Deepika</i>	<i>Hastalakshana dIpika</i>	<i>Name of a text</i>	<i>A text of unknown author, written about hand gestures</i>	<i>A hand gestural text on which Mohiniyattam, Kathakali, Kutiyattam base their hasthabhinaya.</i>
84	<i>Hastam(Skt.)</i>	<i>Hastam</i>	<i>Hand</i>	<i>Hand gesture</i>	<i>Hand gesture</i>
85	<i>Hasyam(Skt.)</i>	<i>HAsyam</i>	<i>Jest/ laughter</i>	<i>A rasa (setiment)</i>	<i>Second rasa of the navarasa which provokes laughter.</i>
86	<i>Idakka(Mal.)</i>	<i>Idaykka</i>	<i>Name of a musical instrument</i>	<i>A musical instrument used for temple rituals</i>	<i>A musical instrument that belongs to the Sopana tradition of Music. This instrument is also a major percussion for Mohiniyattam performance.</i>
87	<i>Idamkal(Mal.)</i>	<i>IdamkAl</i>	<i>Left leg</i>	<i>Left leg</i>	<i>Left leg</i>
88	<i>Idamkai(Mal.)</i>	<i>Idamkai</i>	<i>Left hand</i>	<i>Left hand</i>	<i>Left hand</i>
89	<i>Idamkannu(Mal.)</i>	<i>Idamkannu</i>	<i>Left eye</i>	<i>Left eye</i>	<i>Left eye</i>

90	<i>Iduppu(Mal.)</i>	<i>Iduppu</i>	<i>Waist</i>	<i>Waist</i>	<i>Waist</i>
91	<i>Ilakkathali(Mal.)</i>	<i>IlakkathAli</i>	<i>An ornament</i>	<i>A traditional neck ornament, made of gold</i>	<i>A neck ornament used for the Aharya of Mohiniyattam</i>
92	<i>Ima(Mal.)</i>	<i>Ima</i>	<i>Eye-ball</i>	<i>Eye-ball</i>	<i>Eye-ball</i>
93	<i>Inam(Mal.)</i>	<i>Inam</i>	<i>Item, sort</i>	<i>Dance number</i>	<i>Number in the repertoire</i>
94	<i>Irikkal/Irippu(Mal.)</i>	<i>irikkal/ irippu</i>	<i>State/ condition/ attitude/ Sitting/</i>	<i>Sit-position</i>	<i>Sitting. Sit thoroughly in Aramandala</i>
95	<i>Jada(Mal.)</i>	<i>Jada</i>	<i>Hair</i>	<i>Hair</i>	<i>Hair</i>
96	<i>Janu(Skt.)</i>	<i>JAnu</i>	<i>Knee</i>	<i>Knee</i>	<i>Knee</i>
97	<i>Jatiswaram(Skt.)</i>	<i>Jatiswaram</i>	<i>Name of a dance number</i>	<i>A dance number without expressions</i>	<i>A pure dance sequence in the repertoire of south Indian Classical dance, with emphasis on different movement patterns and the music solely built upon notes. Jati means pure dance sequence with mnemonic syllables and swara means music-notes.</i>
98	<i>Jeeva(Mal)</i>	<i>Jlva</i>	<i>Name of a dance number</i>	<i>A Mohiniyattam dance number in the Sopana repertoire</i>	<i>The concluding item of Sopana repertoire of Mohiniyattam, which expresses</i>

					<i>salvation of the spirit.</i>
99	<i>Jeevatmaavu(Mal)</i>	<i>JlvAtmAvu</i>	<i>Worldly spirit</i>	<i>Worldly spirit</i>	<i>Spirit of the mortals</i>
100	<i>Kaal(Mal)</i>	<i>KAl</i>	<i>Leg/ God of Death</i>	<i>leg</i>	<i>leg</i>
111	<i>Kalari(Mal)</i>	<i>Kalari</i>	<i>Space for martial art practice, worship space,</i>	<i>Practice room</i>	<i>Practice room</i>
112	<i>Kannu(Mal)</i>	<i>Kannu</i>	<i>Eye, crucial one, hole,</i>	<i>eye</i>	<i>Eye</i>
113	<i>Kannu Mizhiykkal(Mal)</i>	<i>Kannumizhiykal</i>	<i>Stare, opening the eyes wide</i>	<i>Opening the eyes wide</i>	<i>Opening the eyes to the maximum</i>
114	<i>Kapitham(Skt.)</i>	<i>Kapittam</i>	<i>Stem of the lotus</i>	<i>A hand gesture</i>	<i>A hand gesture used in Mohiniyattam from Hasthalakshan a deepika.</i>
115	<i>Karthareemugham(Skt.)</i>	<i>KartharEmugham</i>	<i>Face of the Scissors</i>	<i>A hand gesture</i>	<i>A hand gesture used in Mohiniyattam from Hasthalakshan a Deepika.</i>
116	<i>Karunam(Skt)</i>	<i>Karunam</i>	<i>Sense of pathos</i>	<i>One of the nine rasas of the traditional Indian dramaturgy.</i>	<i>Rasa of pathos</i>
117	<i>Katakam(Skt.)</i>	<i>Katakam</i>	<i>Bangle</i>	<i>A hand gesture</i>	<i>A hand gesture used in Mohiniyattam from the text Hasthalakshan a Deepika</i>

118	<i>Kayyu/ Karam(Mal)</i>	<i>Kayyu/karam</i>	<i>Hand/ tax/ Branch</i>	<i>hand</i>	<i>hand</i>
119	<i>Khaga Gati(Skt.)</i>	<i>khaga gati</i>	<i>Movement of a bird/ movement of the arrow, movement of the wind</i>	<i>A foot movement</i>	<i>A Paadagathi resembles the movement of birds</i>
120	<i>Khattitham(Skt .)</i>	<i>khattitham</i>	<i>Collided</i>	<i>A foot movement</i>	<i>Outer-edges of the feet are stressed on the floor while the inner-edges raised slightly.</i>
121	<i>Khattithotsetham(Skt.)</i>	<i>Khattithotsetham</i>	<i>A term</i>	<i>A foot movement</i>	<i>Tapping with the toe then move on the heel-movement of Udkhattitha.</i>
122	<i>Kol (Mal)</i>	<i>KOL</i>	<i>Stick</i>	<i>Teaching devise</i>	<i>Kol- A Stick which is used to produce rhythmic guidance.</i>
123	<i>Konda kettal(Mal)</i>	<i>konda kettal</i>	<i>Hair do</i>	<i>Hair-do of Mohiniyattam</i>	<i>Tying Hair bun on left side of the head</i>
124	<i>Kuthu-Vativu(Mal)</i>	<i>kUthu-vativu</i>	<i>Dramatic structure</i>	<i>Structure of the repertoire</i>	<i>Repertoire of dasiyattam</i>
125	<i>Kukkudapaadam(Skt)</i>	<i>kukkudapAdam</i>	<i>Feet of a cock</i>	<i>Foot movement</i>	<i>A Paadagathi, Dhithithai movement of the foot to the front with little up and down movement of the torso to re-enact the movement of the cock.</i>
126	<i>Kummi(Mal)</i>	<i>Kummi</i>	<i>Clap dance</i>	<i>A clap dance sequence of the Tiruvattirakali</i>	<i>Typical dance sequences appear in Kathakali and Thiruvathirakali etc. a regional form of clap dancing</i>

					<i>with different mandala-positions involved.</i>
127	<i>Kunchitam(Skt)</i>	<i>Kunchitam</i>	<i>Bend</i>	<i>A foot position</i>	<i>A Paada bheda. Heels up and forepart of the foot folded and touched to the floor</i>
128	<i>Kuthikkal(Mal)</i>	<i>Kuthikkal</i>	<i>Jumping</i>	<i>Jumping movement with the feet</i>	<i>Jumping on the front part of the foot with heels up</i>
129	<i>Lakshmi Thalam(Mal)</i>	<i>Lakshmi tAlam</i>	<i>Rhythm of Lakshmi</i>	<i>A pattern of rhythmic cycle</i>	<i>A regional variation of Tala</i>
130	<i>Lasya(Skt.)</i>	<i>LAsya</i>	<i>Erotic / romantic dance</i>	<i>Nature of bodily movement</i>	<i>Category of Shudhanritta as defined by Natyasastra. Feminine in movement-culture. Mohiniyattam is immensely rooted in this tradition.</i>
131	<i>Layam(Skt)</i>	<i>Layam</i>	<i>Blend</i>	<i>Harmony of rhythm</i>	<i>Harmony of rhythm</i>
132	<i>Loka Dharmi(Skt)</i>	<i>lOka dharmi</i>	<i>A term</i>	<i>Mode of representation</i>	<i>Loka dharmi-Natural reproduction of life circumstances.</i>
133	<i>Lolitham(Skt)</i>	<i>LOlitham</i>	<i>The one which moves</i>	<i>Characteristic of a Mohiniyattam movement</i>	<i>Soft and subtle movement</i>
134	<i>Madakkukal(Mal)</i>	<i>Madakkukal</i>	<i>Folds</i>	<i>Folds of body limbs</i>	<i>Holding positions of hands.(Kaala</i>

					<i>madakku, Aramadakku, Mukkal madakku, Muzhumadakk u)</i>
135	<i>Maddalam(Mal)</i>	<i>Maddalam</i>	<i>Percussion instrument</i>	<i>Percussion instrument</i>	<i>Percussion instrument used for Mohiniyattam earlier.</i>
136	<i>Mananam cheyyal(Mal)</i>	<i>mananam cheyyal</i>	<i>Contemplat e</i>	<i>Contemplate</i>	<i>internalising the text and context of the play</i>
137	<i>Mandalam(Skt)</i>	<i>Mandalam</i>	<i>Circle/ disc of the sun/ period of forty days</i>	<i>Basic stance/ second stance in the ten feet positions</i>	<i>Basic stance, knees bended and feet out turned</i>
138	<i>Manduka Padam(Skt)</i>	<i>madUka pAdam</i>	<i>Feet of a frog</i>	<i>A foot movement</i>	<i>One foot is tapped on the floor with bended torso and the other is tapped, the torso raised back.</i>
139	<i>Marditham(Skt)</i>	<i>Mardditam</i>	<i>Oppressed/ being pressed</i>	<i>A foot movement</i>	<i>Dragging the feet harshly (as if the gait of a drunkard.)</i>
140	<i>Matsya Gatati (Skt)</i>	<i>matsya gati</i>	<i>Movement of the fish</i>	<i>A foot movement</i>	<i>Imitation of the movement of fish</i>
141	<i>Mayura Padam (Skt)</i>	<i>mayUra pAdam</i>	<i>Feet of peacock</i>	<i>A feet movement</i>	<i>Moves toward the side with forepart of the feet, as if peacock outstretches its feather palms.</i>
142	<i>Meykannu (Mal)</i>	<i>Meykannu</i>	<i>Body-eye</i>	<i>The entire Sense of body</i>	<i>Sense of movement</i>
143	<i>Meysadhakam (Mal)</i>	<i>Meysadhakam</i>	<i>Bodily exercise/ practice</i>	<i>Body flexibility exercises</i>	<i>Preliminary exercises of dance</i>

145	<i>Meyvazhakam(Mal)</i>	<i>meyvazhakkam</i>	<i>Flexibility of the body</i>	<i>Flexibility of the body</i>	<i>Flexibility and good control over the bodily movements</i>
146	<i>Meyyyu(Mal)</i>	<i>Meyyu</i>	<i>Body</i>	<i>body</i>	<i>body</i>
147	<i>Moditham(Skt)</i>	<i>Moditham</i>	<i>A term</i>	<i>A stance of the body</i>	<i>In Muzhumandala (see muzhumandala) one knee is touched the floor.</i>
148	<i>Mrudula(Skt)</i>	<i>Mrudula</i>	<i>Soft</i>	<i>A movement pattern</i>	<i>A chari movement in Mohiniyattam</i>
149	<i>Mruga Gati (Skt)</i>	<i>mruga gati</i>	<i>Gait of an animal</i>	<i>A foot movement</i>	<i>Imitation of the gait of a deer</i>
150	<i>Mrugasheersham (Skt)</i>	<i>mruga shIrsham</i>	<i>Head of an animal</i>	<i>A hand gesture</i>	<i>A hand gesture used in Mohiniyattam from the text Hastha Lakshana Deepika</i>
151	<i>Mudrakhya (Skt)</i>	<i>MudrAkhyam</i>	<i>Mark/ signet</i>	<i>A hand gesture</i>	<i>A hand gesture used in Mohiniyattam from the text Hastha Lakshana Deepika</i>
152	<i>Mughachalam (Mal)</i>	<i>MughachAlam</i>	<i>Colour of the face</i>	<i>A dance piece</i>	<i>Second number in the repertoire of Sopana Style of Mohiniyattam</i>
153	<i>Mughajabhina yam (Skt)</i>	<i>MughajAbhina yam</i>	<i>Facial expressions</i>	<i>Facial expressions</i>	<i>Facial expressions</i>
154	<i>Mukuram (Skt)</i>	<i>Mukuram</i>	<i>Mirror</i>	<i>A hand gesture</i>	<i>A hand gesture used in Mohiniyattam from the text Hasthalakshan a Deepika</i>

155	<i>Mukkal Mandalam (Mal)</i>	<i>mukkAl mandalam</i>	<i>A term</i>	<i>A posture</i>	<i>Posture comes in between Aramandalam and the Muzhumandalam</i>
156	<i>Muriyadanta (Mal)</i>	<i>Muriyadata</i>	<i>Half of Adanta</i>	<i>A tala</i>	<i>A regional variety of tala</i>
157	<i>Mushti (Skt)</i>	<i>Mushti</i>	<i>Folded palm, a handful</i>	<i>A hand gesture</i>	<i>A hand gesture used in Mohiniyattam from the text Hasthalakshan a Deepika</i>
158	<i>Mutti(Mal)</i>	<i>Mutti</i>	<i>Hammer, a wooden piece</i>	<i>Teaching device</i>	<i>A barrel shaped wooden instrument</i>
159	<i>Muzhumadalam(Mal)</i>	<i>Muzhumandalam</i>	<i>A term</i>	<i>A stance of the body</i>	<i>full-sit on Kunchitha paada and knee out turned position.</i>
160	<i>Nagabhandham(Skt)</i>	<i>NAgabhandham</i>	<i>A term</i>	<i>movement of the foot</i>	<i>A paadagathi, a chari movement</i>
161	<i>Nagalambam (Skt)</i>	<i>NAgalambam</i>	<i>A term</i>	<i>Hair do</i>	<i>Long plaited hair style of Mohiniyattam by parting the hair into three.</i>
162	<i>Nagapatathali (Mal)</i>	<i>nAgapatathAli</i>	<i>An ornament that has the shape of a serpent's hood</i>	<i>A traditional serpent shaped ornament used in Mohiniyattam</i>	<i>Traditional neck ornament used in Mohiniyattam</i>
161	<i>Namaskarikkal (Mal)</i>	<i>namaskarikkal</i>	<i>salutation</i>	<i>salutation</i>	<i>Salutation before the commencement of dance</i>
162	<i>Namitha(Skt)</i>	<i>Namitha</i>	<i>Obeisant</i>	<i>A foot movement</i>	<i>A Chari movement. done between</i>

					<i>the positions, Mukkal and Aramandalas.</i>
163	<i>Natha(Skt)</i>	<i>Natha</i>	<i>A term</i>	<i>A foot movement</i>	<i>A Chari with up and down movement between Kaal-mandala and Aramandala</i>
164	<i>Nattuvangam(Tamil)</i>	<i>Nattuvangam</i>	<i>instrument</i>	<i>A cymbal</i>	<i>Small cymbals used to direct the rhythm in dance</i>
165	<i>Natya-dharmi(Skt)</i>	<i>nAtya-dharmi</i>	<i>A term</i>	<i>Mode of representation of the play</i>	<i>Stylistic representation of the play(According to Natyasasthra)</i>
166	<i>Natyasasthram (Skt)</i>	<i>nAtyasAsthram</i>	<i>The Science of histrionics</i>	<i>The Bible of Indian Arts</i>	<i>Ancient text of dramaturgy, believed to have been written around 2BC by sage Bharatha.</i>
167	<i>Navamallika (Skt)</i>	<i>Navamallika</i>	<i>Jasmine flower</i>	<i>A Flower arrow of the cupid</i>	<i>Arrow of the cupid</i>
168	<i>Navarasam (Skt)</i>	<i>Navarasam</i>	<i>Nine emotions</i>	<i>Nine emotions</i>	<i>Nine emotions in Indian dranaturgy</i>
169	<i>Nayanakarmam/ Netrakarmam (Mal)</i>	<i>nayanakarmam/ nEtrakarmam</i>	<i>Movement of the eyes</i>	<i>Movement of the eyes</i>	<i>Expressions / movements of eyes</i>
170	<i>Neelolpalam (Skt)</i>	<i>NilOlpalam</i>	<i>Blue lotus</i>	<i>An arrow of the cupid</i>	<i>Blue lotused arrow of the cupid</i>
171	<i>Neettal (Mal)</i>	<i>Nittal</i>	<i>stretching</i>	<i>stretching</i>	<i>Stretching of the limbs (torso, hands, legs)</i>
172	<i>Nettiyalukku (Mal)</i>	<i>Nettiyalukku</i>	<i>forehead jewellery being hanged</i>	<i>forehead jewellery being hanged</i>	<i>forehead jewellery being hanged</i>
173	<i>Nilakal/ Nilavu (Mal)</i>	<i>Nilakal</i>	<i>Stance</i>	<i>stance</i>	<i>Stance</i>

174	<i>Nimnonnitha (Skt)</i>	<i>Nimnonnitha</i>	<i>A term</i>	<i>A Movement pattern</i>	<i>Adavus with more up and down movements between Sama and Muzhumandala .</i>
175	<i>Nivaruka (Mal)</i>	<i>Nivaruka</i>	<i>To Stand straight</i>	<i>To Stand straight</i>	<i>Stand straight</i>
176	<i>Nrittamurthi (Skt)</i>	<i>NrittamUrthi</i>	<i>Stance</i>	<i>stance</i>	<i>Body stance</i>
177	<i>Ottinjaan/ Odyanam(Mal)</i>	<i>ottinjAn/ odyAnam</i>	<i>Waist belt</i>	<i>Waist belt</i>	<i>Waist belt</i>
178	<i>Paada pathanam(Mal)</i>	<i>pAda pathanam</i>	<i>Foot movemnet</i>	<i>Foot movement</i>	<i>Foot tapping being used in Mohiniyattam (should be subtle)</i>
179	<i>Paadabheda(Mal)</i>	<i>PAdabhEdam</i>	<i>Kinds of feet positions</i>	<i>Feet positions</i>	<i>Feet positions</i>
180	<i>Paadagathi(Skt)</i>	<i>PAdagathi</i>	<i>Foot movement</i>	<i>Foot movement</i>	<i>Imitation of the gaits of nature's different creatures</i>
181	<i>Parswa Soochi(Skt)</i>	<i>ParswasUchi</i>	<i>A term</i>	<i>A paadabheda</i>	<i>A Paadabheda; one foot is placed naturally on the floor while the other is positioned with heels up and toes touch the floor.</i>
182	<i>Paadam(Mal)</i>	<i>PAdam</i>	<i>Feet</i>	<i>feet</i>	<i>Feet</i>
183	<i>Pakarthal (Mal)</i>	<i>Pakarthal</i>	<i>Copying</i>	<i>Imitation</i>	<i>Imitation/ a thorough following of guru's instructions</i>
184	<i>Pakkamelam (Mal)</i>	<i>PakkamElam</i>	<i>percussion</i>	<i>percussion</i>	<i>Percussion</i>

185	<i>Pallavam (Skt)</i>	<i>Pallavam</i>	<i>A term</i>	<i>A hand gesture</i>	<i>A hand gesture of Mohiniyattam from the text Hasthalakshan a Deepika</i>
186	<i>Pallavi (Skt)</i>	<i>Pallavi</i>	<i>A term</i>	<i>Beginning of a song</i>	<i>Beginning of a song</i>
187	<i>Panam (Mal)</i>	<i>Panam</i>	<i>Money</i>	<i>Remuneration</i>	<i>Remuneration</i>
189	<i>Panchabhana m (Mal)</i>	<i>PanchabhAna m</i>	<i>Five arrows</i>	<i>Five arrows of the cupid</i>	<i>Five arrows of the cupid</i>
190	<i>Panchasharan (Mal)</i>	<i>panchasharan</i>	<i>The Cupid</i>	<i>The Cupid who has five intoxicated arrows</i>	<i>The Cupid who has five intoxicated arrows</i>
191	<i>Panthattam (Mal)</i>	<i>PanthAttam</i>	<i>Ball play</i>	<i>Flower-ball play</i>	<i>Flower ball play. A form of dancing with balls</i>
192	<i>Parshnigam (Skt)</i>	<i>PARshnigam</i>	<i>Related to the heels</i>	<i>Movement of the heels</i>	<i>Movement with the heels, forepart of the feet raised up</i>
193	<i>Parswagam (Skt)</i>	<i>PARswagam</i>	<i>Related to the side</i>	<i>A feet position</i>	<i>Out-turned position of the feet</i>
194	<i>Patana reethi/ Patana Kramam(Mal)</i>	<i>patana rIthi/ patana kramam</i>	<i>Course of study</i>	<i>Course of study</i>	<i>Course of study/ methodology of learning</i>
195	<i>Pathakam(Mal)</i>	<i>PathAkam</i>	<i>A term</i>	<i>A hand gesture</i>	<i>A hand gesture used in Mohiniyattam from the text Hasthalakshan a Deepika</i>
196	<i>Pathinjattam(Mal)</i>	<i>PathinjAttam</i>	<i>Slow paced dancing</i>	<i>Slow paced and detailed enactment</i>	<i>Slow paced and detailed enactment of Kathakali</i>
197	<i>Pirivukal(Mal)</i>	<i>Pirivukal</i>	<i>Separation / turning points</i>	<i>Concluding adavus</i>	<i>Tirmana adavu/ concluding adavu</i>

198	<i>Prathyaleedam (Skt)</i>	<i>PrathyAlldam</i>	<i>A term</i>	<i>stance</i>	<i>From mandala posture one leg is kept in the front corner as if to throw an arrow</i>
199	<i>Prathyangam(Skt)</i>	<i>Pathyangam</i>	<i>A term</i>	<i>Classification of body limbs</i>	<i>Minor limbs</i>
200	<i>Pravana(Skt)</i>	<i>Pravana</i>	<i>A term</i>	<i>A feet movement</i>	<i>A chari movement used in Mohiniyattam</i>
201	<i>Prushta Suchi(Skt)</i>	<i>prushta sUchi</i>	<i>A term</i>	<i>A feet position</i>	<i>A paada bheda, one foot is positioned on the floor normally (Mandala) while the other positioned in the Kunchitha just behind the other foot.</i>
201	<i>Pur suchi(Skt)</i>	<i>PursUchi</i>	<i>A term</i>	<i>A feet position</i>	<i>A paadabheda, one foot is positioned in front of the other with heels up and toe touches the floor.</i>
202	<i>Puraneeru(Mal)</i>	<i>PuranIru</i>	<i>A noun</i>	<i>Name of a raga</i>	<i>A regional raga</i>
203	<i>Rajogunam/ Rajasam(Skt)</i>	<i>rajOgunam/ rAjasam</i>	<i>A term</i>	<i>Royal deeds</i>	<i>One among the three gunas/ qualities of life.</i>
204	<i>Rechakam(Skt)</i>	<i>REchakam</i>	<i>A term</i>	<i>Graceful and fluid movements</i>	<i>Graceful and fluid movements</i>
205	<i>Roudram(Skt)</i>	<i>Roudram</i>	<i>Fury</i>	<i>Furious emotion</i>	<i>Fourth sentiment among the nine emotions, emotion of fury</i>
206	<i>Sadhakam(Mal)</i>	<i>SAdhakam</i>	<i>Regular practice</i>	<i>Regular practice</i>	<i>Regular practice / preliminary exercises</i>

207	<i>Sahithyam</i> (Mal)	<i>SAhithyam</i>	<i>Literature</i>	<i>Literature</i>	<i>Literature part of the compositions</i>
208	<i>Samam</i> (Skt)	<i>Samam</i>	<i>Equal</i>	<i>Equal erect position of the body</i>	<i>Natural standing position of body with the feet together</i>
209	<i>Samaparswa</i> (Skt)	<i>Samaparswa</i>	<i>Sides equal</i>	<i>A feet movement</i>	<i>A Chari movement</i>
210	<i>Sammisram</i> (Mal)	<i>Sammisram</i>	<i>Mixed</i>	<i>mixed</i>	<i>Mixed</i>
211	<i>Samyukta Hastham</i> (Skt)	<i>samyukta hastam</i>	<i>Combined hands</i>	<i>Combined hand gestures</i>	<i>Combined hand gestures.showing the gestures by using both hands.</i>
212	<i>Sangalana Hastham</i> (Skt)	<i>sangalana hastam</i>	<i>Conjoined hand gestures</i>	<i>Conjoined hand gestures</i>	<i>Conjoined hand gestures</i>
213	<i>Santam</i> (Skt)	<i>SAntam</i>	<i>Calm</i>	<i>The last sentiment</i>	<i>The last sentiment among the navarasas. Showcases nothingness.</i>
214	<i>Saptam</i> (Skt)	<i>Saptam</i>	<i>Seventh</i>	<i>A dance number</i>	<i>The last item in the repertoire of Mohiniyattam.this item was renovated by Kalamandalam Kalyanikuttyamma after learning it from the tradition of Guru Korattikara Krishnapanicker. This item is in the format of shloka.</i>
215	<i>Satta</i> (Mal)	<i>Satta</i>	<i>Essence</i>	<i>essence</i>	<i>Core idea of the work.</i>

216	<i>Shadagati(Skt)</i>	<i>ShAdagati</i>	<i>A term</i>	<i>A feet position.</i>	<i>A feet position where left foot being placed in kunjita.</i>
217	<i>Shikharam(Skt)</i>	<i>Shikharam</i>	<i>Branch</i>	<i>A hand gesture</i>	<i>A hand gesture used in Mohiniyattam from the text Hastha Lakshanadeepika.</i>
218	<i>Shlokkham(Skt)</i>	<i>shlOkham</i>	<i>Verse</i>	<i>A dance number</i>	<i>Verses which are performed in the repertoire of Mohiniyattam either separated or included in the numbers.</i>
219	<i>Shishya (Skt./Mal.)</i>	<i>Shishya</i>	<i>Student</i>	<i>student</i>	<i>Student/follower/disciple</i>
220	<i>Shuddhanrittam(Skt)</i>	<i>Shuddhanrittam</i>	<i>Pure dance</i>	<i>Pure dance</i>	<i>Pure dance without abhinaya</i>
221	<i>Smera(Skt)</i>	<i>SmEra</i>	<i>Smiling/pleasant</i>	<i>A foot work</i>	<i>A chari movement.</i>
222	<i>Suchikamugham(Skt)</i>	<i>SUchikAmugham</i>	<i>Tip of the needle</i>	<i>A hand gesture</i>	<i>A hand gesture used in Mohiniyattam from the text Hastha Lakshana deepika</i>
223	<i>Sopana Sangitham(Mal)</i>	<i>sOpAna SangItam</i>	<i>Temple music</i>	<i>A music tradition of Kerala.</i>	<i>Sopanam means the holy steps. Sopana sangitam is a 'kshetra sampradaya' (temple ritual) of Ashtapadi singing.</i>
224	<i>Sringaram(Skt)</i>	<i>SringAram</i>	<i>Lust</i>	<i>King among the nine</i>	<i>First emotion among the nine</i>

				<i>sentiments</i>	<i>rasas known as 'Rasaraja' (King of emotions). Represent the mood of 'delight'</i>
225	<i>Sthanakam(Skt)</i>	<i>StAnakam</i>	<i>A term</i>	<i>A posture</i>	<i>1st mandalam ,masculine posture with distanced feet and straight body</i>
226	<i>Sukaathundam (Skt)</i>	<i>Sukathundam</i>	<i>Peak of the bird</i>	<i>A hand gesture</i>	<i>A hand gesture used in Mohiniyattam from Hastha Lakshana deepika.</i>
227	<i>Swasthikam(Skt)</i>	<i>swasthikam</i>	<i>crossed</i>	<i>a feet position</i>	<i>A paadabheda, heels up and sitting of the forepart of the feet crossed.</i>
228	<i>Tantrik Mudra(Skt)</i>	<i>tAntrik mudra</i>	<i>Gesture related to the tantric sastra</i>	<i>Gestures related to the tantric sastra</i>	<i>Gestures formulated from the tantric Sastra. This work is majorly done by Kalyanikuttiyamma School of Mohiniyattam.</i>
229	<i>Taruni(Skt)</i>	<i>Taruni</i>	<i>Young woman</i>	<i>A movement pattern of the feet</i>	<i>A chari</i>
230	<i>Tatatmyam(Skt)</i>	<i>TAtAtmyam</i>	<i>sameness</i>	<i>Empathy</i>	<i>Empathise the emotion of the character</i>
231	<i>Thaditham(Skt)</i>	<i>ThAditham</i>	<i>A term</i>	<i>A feet position</i>	<i>A Padabheda, tapping with the forepart of the foot while the heels rest on the floor.</i>
232	<i>Thakka(Mal)</i>	<i>Thakka</i>	<i>Eligible/ A wooden ear stud</i>	<i>Ear stud</i>	<i>Traditional ear stud</i>

233	<i>Thalam (Mal)</i>	<i>ThAlam</i>	<i>Rhythm</i>	<i>Rhythm</i>	<i>Rhythm. There are many thalas used in Mohiniyattam from both margi and desi traditions.</i>
234	<i>Thalamudikettu(Mal)</i>	<i>Talamudikettu</i>	<i>Coiffure</i>	<i>Coiffure</i>	<i>Coiffure</i>
235	<i>Thamogunam(Skt)</i>	<i>ThamOgunam</i>	<i>Evil deed</i>	<i>A quality</i>	<i>One among the three gunas (swastika gunam, rajogunam, thamogunam)</i>
236	<i>Tanmayatwam (Skt)</i>	<i>Thanmayatwam</i>	<i>Sameness, being the same</i>	<i>Sate of being natural</i>	<i>Imbibing the essence of the character fully</i>
237	<i>Thanmayeebhavam(Mal)</i>	<i>ThanmayIbhavam</i>	<i>„</i>	<i>„</i>	<i>„</i>
238	<i>Thattipaadal(Mal)</i>	<i>ThattipAdal</i>	<i>Beating of the rhythm and singing</i>	<i>Singing giving along the rhythmic notation with a stick</i>	<i>Singing along with Nattuvangam. 'Thattuka' means, to give rhythmic directions with stick and 'Paaduka' means singing. Combined practice of this will make students sound in Thala.</i>
239	<i>Tauryatrikam(Skt)</i>	<i>Tauryatrikam</i>	<i>Combination of the three</i>	<i>Combination of music, dance and instruments</i>	<i>Combination of Nritta, Geetha, Vadya. Guru. Bharathi Shivaji had done a production in Mohiniyattam under this title.</i>

240	<i>Thazhnnirikkal (Mal)</i>	<i>thAzhnnirikkal</i>	<i>Sit down position</i>	<i>Maximum push into the Aramandalam</i>	<i>Proper and intensive level of doing Aramandala</i>
241	<i>Thillana (Tamil)</i>	<i>ThillAna</i>	<i>A rhythmic number</i>	<i>A rhythmic number in the repertoire of Mohiniyattam</i>	<i>A rhythmic number in the repertoire of Mohiniyattam</i>
242	<i>Thittiithai (Mal)</i>	<i>Thittitai</i>	<i>A mnemonic syllable</i>	<i>A mnemonic syllable</i>	<i>Syllable of the Tirmana adavu of Mohiniyattam</i>
243	<i>Thoda (Mal)</i>	<i>thOda</i>	<i>Traditional big ear stud</i>	<i>Traditional ear stud used for Mohiniyattam performances</i>	<i>Traditional ear stud used for Mohiniyattam performances</i>
244	<i>Thoppi Maddalam (Mal)</i>	<i>thoppi maddalam</i>	<i>Rustic drum</i>	<i>Double faced horizontally kept, sylldrical drum; used traditionally used for thullal performances</i>	<i>Traditional double-faced drum used for Thullal and other performing traditions.</i>
245	<i>Tirmana Adavu (Tamil)</i>	<i>tIrmAna adavu</i>	<i>A term</i>	<i>Concluding steps</i>	<i>A pattern of movement units specially performed in the end part of the movement sequences.</i>
246	<i>Ulachil (Mal)</i>	<i>Ulacchil</i>	<i>Swinging and swatying</i>	<i>Swaying movement</i>	<i>Swaying movement of torso. This is the heart-core movement of Mohiniyattam.</i>
247	<i>Unnatha (Mal)</i>	<i>Unnata</i>	<i>Highest/great</i>	<i>A movement pattern</i>	<i>A chari</i>
248	<i>Upangam (Skt)</i>	<i>UpAngam</i>	<i>Subsidiary limbs/</i>	<i>Minor limbs</i>	<i>Second category of</i>

			<i>unimportant parts</i>		<i>limbs (anga upanga pratyangas) Minor limbs.</i>
249	<i>Urnanabham (Skt)</i>	<i>UrnanAbham</i>	<i>Spider</i>	<i>A hand gesture</i>	<i>A hand gesture used in Mohiniyattam from the text Hatha Lakshana deepika.</i>
250	<i>Uthghattitham (Skt)</i>	<i>Uthghattitham</i>	<i>A term</i>	<i>A movement pattern</i>	<i>Tapping with the heels.</i>
251	<i>Vaaypattu (Mal)</i>	<i>VAyppAttu</i>	<i>Vocal music</i>	<i>Vocal music</i>	<i>Vocal support</i>
252	<i>Vaaythaari (Mal)</i>	<i>VAythAri</i>	<i>Syllables</i>	<i>Mnemonic syllables</i>	<i>Mnemonic syllables also called 'chollu'</i>
253	<i>Vachikabhinayam (Skt)</i>	<i>VAchikAbhinayam</i>	<i>Verbal expression</i>	<i>One among Caturvidhabhinaya (Four kinds of Abhinaya)</i>	<i>Verbal expression</i>
254	<i>Vadakk (Mal)</i>	<i>Vadakku</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>north</i>	<i>north</i>
255	<i>Vatimb (Mal)</i>	<i>Vatimbu</i>	<i>A term</i>	<i>Basic posture of Kathakali often used for Mohiniyattam</i>	<i>Aramandala posture with the inner edges of the feet raised up</i>
256	<i>Vativu (Mal)</i>	<i>Vativu</i>	<i>Straightness</i>	<i>Straight position</i>	<i>Staright position of the body</i>
257	<i>Vaishakham (Skt)</i>	<i>Vaishakham</i>	<i>A month of Hindu Lunar Year</i>	<i>Stance</i>	<i>Posture of King. In Aramandala, one leg is raised up slightly.</i>
258	<i>Vaishnava (Skt)</i>	<i>Vaishnava</i>	<i>Related to lord Vishnu</i>	<i>Feet position</i>	<i>Paadabheda, the basic stance in Mohiniyattam. especially in Kalamandalam school.</i>

259	<i>Valamkaal(Mal)</i>	<i>ValamkAl</i>	<i>Right leg</i>	<i>Right leg</i>	<i>Right leg</i>
260	<i>Valamkai(Mal)</i>	<i>Valamkai</i>	<i>Right hand</i>	<i>Right hand</i>	<i>Right hand</i>
261	<i>Valayam(Mal)</i>	<i>Valayam</i>	<i>Circle/ aura</i>	<i>A movement pattern of the feet</i>	<i>A chari, circular movement of feet to the back</i>
262	<i>Vandikkal(Mal)</i>	<i>Vandikkal</i>	<i>Salutation</i>	<i>Salutation</i>	<i>Salutation, before starting up dance. Also known as Kumbidal and Namaskaram</i>
263	<i>Vardhamanaka m(Skt)</i>	<i>VardhamAnak am</i>	<i>A term</i>	<i>A hand gesture</i>	<i>A hand gesture used in Mohiniyattam from the text, Hastha Lakshana deepika.</i>
264	<i>Varnam(Skt)</i>	<i>Varnam</i>	<i>Colour</i>	<i>A dance number</i>	<i>A major number of Mohiniyattam repertoire. It is a combination of pure-nritta and abhinaya.</i>
265	<i>Vartula Chalanam(Mal)</i>	<i>vartula chalanam</i>	<i>Circular movement</i>	<i>Circular pattern of a movement</i>	<i>The predominant movement pattern of Mohiniyattam.</i>
266	<i>Vasanthan(Mal)</i>	<i>Vasanthan</i>	<i>Spring season</i>	<i>Spring season</i>	<i>Spring, companion of cupid</i>
267	<i>Vattam(Mal)</i>	<i>Vattam</i>	<i>Circle</i>	<i>Circle</i>	<i>circle</i>
268	<i>Vattam varaykkuka (Mal)</i>	<i>vattam varaykkuka</i>	<i>Drawing the circle</i>	<i>Movement direction</i>	<i>Rolling the torso in circular pattern/ circling the eye balls</i>

269	<i>Veera rasa</i>	<i>vIra rasa</i>	<i>Heroic sentiment</i>	<i>One among the nine rasas</i>	<i>One among the nava-rasas; this is the heroic sentiment.</i>
270	<i>Vinyasam(skt)</i>	<i>VinyAsam</i>	<i>Arrangement / exhibition/ establishment</i>	<i>Elaboration of Abhinaya</i>	<i>Execution of Abhinaya in detail</i>
271	<i>Vipralamba Sringaram(Skt)</i>	<i>vipralamba sringAram</i>	<i>Separation of lovers</i>	<i>Separation in love</i>	<i>State of being separated from the lover</i>
272	<i>Virahotkhandit ha(Skt)</i>	<i>virahOtkhandit a</i>	<i>Woman who is separated from her love</i>	<i>Nayika avasta , one among the eight statuses of Nayikas related to the relationship with her lover.</i>	<i>Virahotkhadita is one of the frequently adapted Nayikavastha in Indian Classical Dances.</i>
273	<i>Virappikkal (Mal)</i>	<i>Virappikkal</i>	<i>Shivering/ vibrating</i>	<i>Movement pattern</i>	<i>Shivering movement with eyes/ lips/palms/ fingers etc.</i>
274	<i>Vruttam(Mal)</i>	<i>Vruttam</i>	<i>Circle</i>	<i>Circular-Movement measures developed in Kalyanikuttiya -amma School</i>	<i>Circular movements of hands and torso (Kaal vrutham, Ara vrutham, Mukkal Vrutham, Muzhu vrutham)</i>

Appendix 1B: Historical terms related to the development of Mohiniyattam

	<i>Term</i>	<i>Transliteration</i>	<i>Translation / Explanation</i>
275	<i>Achi</i>	<i>Acchi</i>	<i>Women/ Wife</i>
276	<i>Adimayirutth</i>	<i>Adimayiruttu</i>	<i>ritual of proclaiming as a slave</i>
277	<i>Aduthoonu</i>	<i>AdutUnu</i>	<i>Pension</i>
278	<i>Balaramabharatham</i>	<i>balarAma bharatham</i>	<i>A treatise written by Kartika Tirunal Balarama Varma on art</i>
279	<i>Chera</i>	<i>ChEra</i>	<i>Tamil Rulers of ancient Kerala during the Sangam epoch.</i>
280	<i>Cilappatikaram</i>	<i>cilappatikAram</i>	<i>A sangam literature written by King Ilanko Adikal</i>
281	<i>Dasiattam</i>	<i>dAsiAttam</i>	<i>Temple dancing tradition of the South India, performed by women.</i>
282	<i>Devadasi</i>	<i>dEvadAsi</i>	<i>Servant of god.</i>
283	<i>Dinacharya</i>	<i>Dinacharya</i>	<i>Day rituals/ routine</i>
284	<i>Garbhagruham</i>	<i>Garbhagruham</i>	<i>Sanctorum</i>
285	<i>Janmi</i>	<i>Janmi</i>	<i>Feudal chieftain</i>
286	<i>Jathikettu</i>	<i>jAtikkettu</i>	<i>Cast rules</i>
287	<i>Kaikottikali</i>	<i>Kaikottikali</i>	<i>Regional social/ ceremonial dancing of women of Hindu Community</i>
288	<i>Kathakali</i>	<i>Kathakali</i>	<i>Classical dance drama of Kerala</i>
289	<i>Khoshayathra</i>	<i>khOshayAtra</i>	<i>Thullal story written by Kunchan Nambiar</i>
290	<i>Koothachi</i>	<i>kUthacchi</i>	<i>Synonym of dancer</i>
291	<i>Koothar</i>	<i>KUthar</i>	<i>Koothu Performers</i>
292	<i>Kulasekhara</i>	<i>kulasEkhara</i>	<i>Title of Travancore rulers</i>
293	<i>Kutiyattam</i>	<i>kUtiyAttam</i>	<i>(Combined dancing) ancient classical Sanskrit theatre of Kerala</i>
294	<i>Maddalam</i>	<i>maddalam</i>	<i>Percussion instrument</i>
295	<i>Nair</i>	<i>nAyar</i>	<i>A dominant caste division of Kerala</i>
296	<i>Nangiar koothu</i>	<i>nangyAr kUthu</i>	<i>An allied art of Kutiyattam, performed by the women of Nambiar community.</i>
297	<i>Nokkuvidya</i>	<i>nOkkuvidya</i>	<i>a regional form of puppetry</i>

298	<i>Padinikal</i>	<i>pAdinikal</i>	<i>Dancers of Sangam epoch as mentioned in Sangam Literature</i>
299	<i>Panar</i>	<i>PAnar</i>	<i>Actors of Sangam epoch as mentioned in Sangam literature</i>
300	<i>Panthadinruttam</i>	<i>pantadinruttam</i>	<i>Ball playing dance</i>
301	<i>Pathitrupathu</i>	<i>Pathitrupattu</i>	<i>A poredominant sangam literature, written in praise of ten Chera rulers.</i>
302	<i>Peruvankiyam</i>	<i>peruvAnkiyam</i>	<i>A drum instrument mentioned in Sangam literature</i>
303	<i>Sambandham</i>	<i>Sambhandham</i>	<i>An old marital system.</i>
304	<i>Sari Nrittam</i>	<i>sAri nrittam</i>	<i>Dances of Kathakali female characters</i>
305	<i>Tamilakam</i>	<i>Tamilakam</i>	<i>Geographical regions of ancient Tamil speaking people.</i>
306	<i>Thebadicci Attam/ Thevadissi Attam</i>	<i>thEvadicchi Attam/ thEvadissi Attam</i>	<i>Dance of Devadasi</i>
307	<i>Thiruvati Charthuka</i>	<i>thiruvati chArthuka</i>	<i>Donating valuables to the temple deity and temple dancers by the temple-visitors.</i>
308	<i>Thullal</i>	<i>Thullal</i>	<i>A satirical solo dance form of Kerala, invented by Kunchan Naliar</i>
309	<i>Thunankai-koothu</i>	<i>Thunankai-kUthu</i>	<i>A specific dance sequences performed by females at the battlefield to evoke the energy of warrior during the chera rule.</i>
310	<i>Vanji</i>	<i>Vanji</i>	<i>Capital city of Chera rule in Kerala</i>
311	<i>Vayariyar</i>	<i>vayariyAr</i>	<i>Dancers during the Sangam epoch.</i>
312	<i>Vyavaharamala</i>	<i>vyavahAramAla</i>	<i>A treatise written by Mazhamangalam Narayanan Nabudiri about Indian jurisprudence in 16th century.</i>
313	<i>Kalamezhuthu Pattu</i>	<i>kalamezhuTupATu</i>	<i>A ritual of Bhagavathi worship performed in the temples of Kerala. In which the performer draws the portrait of Bhagavathi on the ground with the natural colour powders. This offering is given to the Hindu deities; Bhagavathi, Ayyappa and Snake gods and goddesses.</i>

Appendix 2

2A (to refer with chapter 4) Questionnaire prepared for the Survey

[Survey was taken with performing art students and scholars of Kerala Kalamandalam university on the dates, 17, August, 2016 and 28, September, 2016. Out of 179 participants, 150 were responded. There were four groups of responders; students of Art Higher Secondary, Bachelor of Performing Arts, Masters in Performing Arts, M Phil, and PhD of Kerala *Kalamandalam*. Two questionnaires further distinguished these groups into two, learning oriented and research oriented. Survey was entitled as “Questionnaire about Dance studies; teaching, training and learning”.]

Questionnaire 1: Dance studies, teaching, training and learning”

Note: This questionnaire is prepared to get acquainted with the Course details, Practice sessions, Teaching Methodology, Practical Exams, Mental and Physical health of the pupil, Academics, Extra Curricular Activities, Teacher-Student Relationship of the residential art institute, *Kerala Kalamandalam*. No attributes of this survey will be manipulated in any wrong manner intending bad reputation of the institute. This survey is taken as part of the data collection of the present researcher. The respondents are free to elaborate their answers if the objective questions need explanatory answers. Also fill the personal details on the top column of the questionnaire. If requires, respondents can also use pseudo names.

Name:

Date of Birth:

Course Details:

Course period:

Mob. No. & Email ID:

Part One- Objective

- 1) In Which year you joined in *Kalamandalam*?
- 2) How much time will you spend on doing self-practice after the class?
 - a) Four hours in a day
 - b) 2-3 hours in a day
 - c) Haven't been doing everyday
 - d) At the end of the week
- 3) Do you correct each other the dance lessons?

- a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Haven't cared
 - d) Sometimes/ only during the exam time
- 4) Do you have the habit of correcting your dance moves and postures in front of the long mirror of *Kuthambalam*?
- a) Yes
 - b) Sometimes
 - c) No
 - d) Regularly
- 5) Have you getting special lessons on make-up, Nattuvangam etc?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Twice in a week
 - d) During non-working days
- 6) How do you prepare for practical examinations?
- a) By doing self-practice
 - b) By doing practice with the fellow students
 - c) By seeking the help of teachers
 - d) By seeking the help of seniors/ experts
- 7) Have you getting special lessons in relation with exams?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) During annual exams
 - d) Not at all
- 8) How about your perception about the comprehensiveness of the dance movements?
- a) Perfect
 - b) Incomplete
 - c) Complicated

- d) To be improvised
- 9) Do you have the habit of analysing your own movement competence?
- a) Occasionally
 - b) Quite often
 - c) Not at all
 - d) Haven't cared
- 10) Have you experienced dehydration during the practice time?
- a) Yes
 - b) Only during the summer
 - c) It happens twice in a week
 - d) No
- 11) Do have any problems related with balancing your body weight?
- a) Yes, with over weight
 - b) Yes, with under-weight
 - c) Yes, having both issues
 - d) No
- 12) How many days you are allowed to take leave from the practice during the menstruation time?
- a) First two days of the menstrual period
 - b) Not allowed to take leave from the practice
 - c) sometimes
 - d) First three-four days
- 13) If not taking leave how do you overcome the hectic days with practice?
- a) Taking medical help
 - b) By doing particular exercises for reducing the pain
 - c) By tying the cloth tight in the belly while practice
 - d) Haven't cared
- 14) Do you have a regular menstrual period?
- a) Not regular
 - b) Regular and healthy one

- c) Sometimes irregular
 - d) Having problems related to menstruation
- 15) Do you keep a healthy diet?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Food intake is at an adequate level
 - d) Having over eating disorder
- 16) Have you noticed a disordered food intake among any of the students?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Have seen in two three fellow students
 - d) Have seen in many students
- 17) Are you interested in attending academic activities like dance-seminars and dance-recitals etc?
- a) Greatly interested
 - b) Average interest
 - c) Below average
 - d) Not interested
- 18) Do you participate in informal discussions about the seminars and recitals, you have attended?
- a) Yes, actively
 - b) Not actively
 - c) Sometimes
 - d) Not at all
- 19) Do you get processional and musical accompaniment in your practical class?
- a) Yes, everyday
 - b) Twice in a week
 - c) Not getting
 - d) Only related with practical exam and performance rehearsals
- 20) How many times you get music lessons in a week?

- a) Once
 - b) Twice
 - c) Thrice in a week
 - d) Everyday
- 21) Do you have music exam?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Sometimes
 - d) Yes, in connection with the annual year exam
- 22) Do you get disturbed with any of the following; stage-fear, fear, anxiety, lack of confidence etc.?
- a) At times
 - b) Always
 - c) Constantly
 - d) Not at all
- 23) Do you participate in Literary programmes arranged in your institute?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Sometimes
 - d) Not at all
- 24) How you keep your relation with guru? Is it a detached one with great respect and fear or a friendly one?
- a) Detached
 - b) Attached
 - c) Detached and attached
 - d) not able to articulate
- 25) Do you discuss your problems about mental and physical fitness with your guru?
- a) Yes
 - b) If the teacher notices
 - c) At times

- d) Not at all
- 26) How is your teacher's attitude towards your problems?
 - a) Listens and sorts out the problems
 - b) Nonresponsive
 - c) Listen sympathetically
 - d) Ignorant
- 27) How do you care about the injuries you have got from your dance practice?
 - a) By taking leave from the class
 - b) Do not care much
 - c) Practice thoroughly without caring the injury
 - d) Taking medical help
- 28) How does the teacher correct your movement errors?
 - a) Scolding harshly
 - b) By giving some scolding and punishment
 - c) Compassionately
 - d) Do not care
- 29) Do you mind reminding your teacher when she slips a step in the class?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Hesitant to remind
 - d) Ignoring
- 30) Are your learning modules are enhanced with modern technological equipments?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Partially
 - d) Only during the exam time
- 31) Do you get theoretical and historic knowledge about your art form from your practical class?
 - a) Yes

- b) No
 - c) Sometimes
 - d) Only in connection with the preparation of annual exam
- 32) Do you ask your doubts about the changes and growth of your body to your teacher?
- a) Yes, always
 - b) Sometimes
 - c) Not at all
 - d) If the teacher notices

Part 2- Descriptive

- 33) Write about your stage experience?
- 34) When was your dance debut at the institute and how you remember it?
- 35) What is good and bad in you, if at all you find something;

Appendix 2B (to refer with chapter 4) Questionnaire 2: 'Learning and teaching methodology of *Mohiniyattam*'

Name (not necessary):

Date of Birth:

Course, Course Subject:

Course period:

Educational status (U G C Scholar (JRF) / University Research Scholar/ P G Scholar Guest Faculty):

Learning; Part 1 (Objective)

1. Which dance form was introduced to you first?
 - a) *Bharathanatyam*
 - b) *Mohiniyattam*
 - c) *Kuchipudi*
 - d) Folk dances/ Non-classical dance forms
2. From where did you start learning *Mohiniyattam*?

- a) From *Kalamandalam*
- b) From a local *Mohiniyattam* practitioner (before joining K K M)
- c) Learnt as part of competitions
- d) Introduced as part of cultural course in School.

3. What did you learn first in *Mohiniyattam*?

- a) *Cholkettu*
- b) Fundamental *Adavus*
- c) *Varnam / Padam*
- d) Fusion form of *Mohiniyattam*

4. How did your body react to the training of the art form in the beginning?

- a) Body felt strange & awkward
- b) Ailments affected more so on the upper torso than the other parts of body
- c) The regions of upper-torso and the thigh muscles were mainly affected by the ailments
- d) None of the above

5. How do you differ the learning system of *Mohiniyattam* with the other dance forms you were into earlier? (If you have learnt any other art form earlier?)

- a) The preliminaries (exercises / *adavus*) of *Mohiniyattam* is quite difficult to achieve
- b) *Mohiniyattam* needs more physical stamina than any other art form to convey it in its fullest as it is slow paced and more intricate in nature
- c) body aches were too heavy compared to learning of other dance forms
- d) None of the above

Part- 2 (Subjective)

6. When did you join in *Kalamandalam*? What did you feel about the new shift of life there?

Ans:

7. How was the time schedule of the classes in *Kalamandalam*?

Ans:

8. How many times the syllabus and time schedule of Dance got rearranged during your course? Specify the years

Ans:

9. How do you differ the training styles of *Kalamandalam* and your earlier local dance school?

Ans:

Performance; (Objective)

10. After your course in *Kalamandalam* how did you evolve/ mature your body upto the level you had conceived earlier?

- a) Reproduced the rendition by inducing the strategies of yoga and other physical arts
- b) Continued at the institution and replicated the same school of rendition in a more enhanced way
- c) Brought out some theatrical and martial elements to the body to make the rendition more effective.
- d) Using the techniques of meditation and somatic practices to maximize the grace of the art form.

11. The recent endeavour of intermingling alternative art forms is a fruitful conversion in the uplift of *Mohiniyattam*. Do you agree?

- a) Agree
- b) Strongly agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly disagree

12. How do you see the current trend of initiation of male performers into *Mohiniyattam* arena?

- a) Something to be propagated more
- b) *Mohiniyattam* is a feminine dance form
- c) No answer
- d) Something indifferent

13. How is your makeup done for the performances?

- a) Depends on a makeup artist

- b) self- make-up
- c) Gets it done by your co-performer or anyone else.
- d) Face makeup is done by self and the hair-dress is done by someone else or the reverse.

Research & Academics; (Objective)

14. Do you think that the P.G./ M. Phil/ Ph.D. courses are upto the mark as far as a student of performing art is concerned?

- a) Theoretical aspects are to be developed
- b) The possibilities of modern technology should be utilized more
- c) The presentational skills of the students are to be addressed more
- d) all of the above

15. Are you satisfied with the course work (for M Phil/ Ph D scholars) given in *Kalamandalam*?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Partially
- d) Satisfied fully

Descriptive (for M Phil/ Ph D scholars);

16. Can you specify the course titles (subjects) that you have covered during the course work of your research?

Ans:

Teaching methodology; Part -1 (Objective)

17. How do you assess your pupil's performance?

- a) By holding practical tests in regular intervals
- b) By holding surprise practical tests
- c) By making the students dance individually in the class
- d) None of the above

18. Admonition (scolding) and punishment are inevitable methods used for dance teaching. Do you agree?

- a) Agree
- b) Strongly agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly disagree

19. In the residential training system of dance pupils are not meant to visit their homes in regular intervals. Do you agree?

- a) Agree
- b) Strongly agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly disagree

20. At what point of time the debut of the dancer is to be held?

- a) After completing 4 years of training
- b) after completing 5 years of training
- c) after 6 years of training
- d) a time frame is not applicable

21. The content of the syllabus included in the present curriculum of dance has to be improved to a great extent. What do you think?

- a) Present curriculum is an adequate one
- b) The content of the syllabus has to be enhanced
- c) Theoretical and musical aspects of dance have to be addressed in an advanced manner
- d) None of the above

22. Do you apply the theories of *Lakshana Grandhas* of dance in your class? Or do you instil knowledge on *Lakshana Grandhas* and its practicality to your students?

- a) Yes, I make my students to analyse the *Lakshya* aspects of *Lakshana Grandhas* through their dance movements.
- b) Pupils are not much efficient to grasp the *Lakshya/ Lakshana* aspects.
- c) I make them to learn some fundamental *Slokhas* of *Lakshana Grandhas* along with its practical aspects

d) I make them learn some of the *Shlokhas* of *Lakshana Grandhas* without introducing its practicability.

23. When alternative art forms are trained under the same compartment, Is there any possibility of neighbourhood reflections and artistic intakes into pedagogy of the respective art forms?

a) Its obvious when two different forms of dance are taught by an individual and to one group of students

b) No, art forms are trained by different faculties at different class rooms

c) No answer

d) none of the above

Part- 2 (Subjective)

24. How many students are there in your class?

Ans:

25. For which batch you are taking classes?

Ans:

26. How did you formulate your own strategy of teaching dance?

Ans:

27. What all include in your teaching modules that you have developed?

Ans:

28. Have you made the debut of your students? How did you prepare them in your own way?

Ans:

29. What sort of changes you expect in the current pedagogic system of *Kalamandalam*? What are your suggestions to enhance the current dance pedagogy of *Mohiniyattam* in general?

Ans:

30. Most of the traditionalists stick up to their own rigid manifestos of art. They even don't appreciate watching other forms of art than their own. Experimenting is seen as a heresy. But today's artistes are open to a wide spectrum of trans-cultural practices of dance. They watch a lot of art forms and they are free to adapt it to their own training and practicing systems. Does this paradigm shift of thought, really help to explore new fruitful ways in the area of dance pedagogy?

Ans:

**Appendix 2C (to refer with chapter 4) Nuances of institutional pedagogy of
Mohiniyattam today: Report and Analysis**

No .	Major Findings of the Survey	Existing Issue	Analysis
1	The 'eight years' rigorous training is diluted to three to five years as the students get admission at the institute from the secondary school and even from the graduate level.	What is the relevance of 'years' in the dance pedagogic system?	Questionnaire response shows that not all the students have joined in <i>Kalamandalam</i> at the beginning of the course. While some students got admission in eighth standard, some students in ninth and rest in Plus one joined in the course of <i>Kalamandalam</i> . This is rare in the history of <i>Kalamandalam</i> . <i>Kalamandalam</i> initially had a four years' diploma course and when schooling got introduced it came to start from the standard eight. When the researcher herself joined in the course at <i>Kalamandalam</i> in 2001, it was unofficially declared as an eight year's course where at the end the students would be titled with the prefix ' <i>Kalamandalam</i> '. And no students were allowed to join in the mid path of the course.
2	The evening practice sessions (at the hostel) are no longer being a strict practice and nobody is usually there to monitor the practice.	What is the benefit of evening practice?	The rigorous practice-time schedule of <i>Kalamandalam</i> is hardly seen here. Most of the students do self-practice only at the weekend or some days of the week. In prior days, daily self-practice (evening hostel-practice) was a must-do sort of a thing in <i>Kalamandalam</i> . Teachers could easily find that who has done and who hasn't done the yester eve's practice.
3	Disinterest towards understanding the inadequacies of one's own body movements has seen in the attitude of most of the present students of the institute. And also, most of the students are not	What creates this wrong attitude of students towards dance practice?	<i>Kalamandalam Koothambalam</i> has two full length mirrors behind the <i>Nritha Mandapam</i> (Stage). <i>Meyyu sadhaka</i> is performed in this sacred house by the dance students during 7 am to 8 am morning hour. Usually after the <i>Sadhaka</i> session students would crowd in front of the mirror to see and assess their dance postures and movements. This collective habit is being forwarded to generations to generations unchanged. This marks nothing but ardency and curiosity of the learner. This passion is alive but not that

	utilizing the mirror or any supporting system to self-correct their movement-technique.		sound, survey indicates. Only few out of the total respondents express that they do the mirror correction every-day at the <i>Koothambala</i> mirror. This can be read as deteriorating interest of students in learning dance.
4	Even though 'Kottipaadal' is part of curriculum, it is not taught at an assigned time.	What is the relevance of <i>Kottipaadal</i> ? And what is the existing issue with the lessons of the same under the institution?	Survey response shows that there is no proper <i>Nattuvangam</i> and Make up classes for the students and 'Kotti Padal' also has no scheduled time, it is taken according to the item being taught there. Learning <i>Nattuvangam</i> would enhance the rhythmic competence of the learner and helps the learner to be more creative in making new Jatis and movement choreographies.
5	Students are hesitant to take corrections under their seniors at the hostel.	Why so? And what could be the issue even they are not doing it?	Practical exam is of high importance in the curriculum of <i>Kalamandalam</i> as any other academic institute does. Students prepare for the exam in many ways. Most of the students here by said that they practice with the fellow students for the preparation of practical exam. The most fruitful way or traditionally followed way was to do practice under some expert's eyes. Unfortunately, many of the students here are not taking the opportunity rightly. This indicates the drastic change of attitude of the pupil from the former batch students of <i>Kalamandalam</i> . When the researcher was a student at <i>Kalamandalam</i> , evening hostel practice was a compulsory praxis and it was monitored by the senior most students of the institute.
6	No additional classes are given to the students by the teachers even when the students lack thorough practice and training.	Why and when are additional classes being necessary? Have ever been this sort of classes being taken	There are no special classes given to the students as supplementary to the exams according to the most appeared answer in the survey. Special classes were there earlier especially for the subsidiary form, <i>Kuchipudi</i> . The teacher used to come on non-working days if she is not satisfied with the performance of the students.

		at the institute?	
7	Students show a positive attitude towards the comprehensiveness of movement technique.	What is their attitude towards the comprehensiveness of movement technique?	Students reacted to the question about their conception of comprehensiveness quite differently. Yet most of them commented that it has to be more improvised. And that is always good attitude for the learner. Being perfect in movement skills could be an unfinished task ever as it has to be improvised at each time of its execution.
8	Most of the students are attentive about correcting and beautifying their movement pattern while some says that they never have cared this matter.	What creates this disinterest towards dance learning among some students?	Most of the students are attentive about correcting and beautifying their movement pattern while few out of the total mentioned that they never have been cared this matter. That indicates some of the students seriously lack interest in learning dance under the institutional umbrella. For some students this mental state rather would not be made natural but because of the situational crisis. This state of disinterestedness could be an outcome of embarrassing or self-distressing event they had previously passed through. Teachers are also supposed to motivate them to be more self-confident while using the traditional treatment of abuse.
9	Most of the students get dehydrated during the day hours of practice.	Why they get dehydrated? How they overcome the health issues? How the institute addresses this health issues of students?	Dancer's body gets dehydrated easily. And it is the responsibility of the dancer to take care of the water balance in her body. <i>Kalamandalam</i> has such diet plan for the students that keeps them away from the zone of dehydration. The morning gruel (they call it as <i>Pattikamthodi Sampradayam</i>) helps them to keep their body hydrated and healthy. The survey shows us that most of the students are keen in keeping the body hydrated. UTI (Urinary Tract Infection) is yet a quite usual body-phenomenon that most of the students of dance get infected with. Sitting with excessively sweated body and wet clothes could be a reason for it. Students are not advised to consume water immediately after the practice. It can rather increase the chance of getting sprains in the stomach.

10	Food intake of the students is not in a parallel healthy level. Some students express that they have over eating habits and some students have less intake of food.	How the students treat their health and body balance? What could be the ideal weight and food intake of the dance student?	Reading between the students' practice and food habit made me to think again about their lack of interest in learning and taking dance discipline seriously. In dancing, body is the sole instrument of the form. Dance could not happen with a non-treated body. Treating dance is nothing but treating the body. Thorough practice and sufficient amount of food-intake balance a dancer's body from the threat of being bodily over-grown and being grown under-weight. This helps a dancer to make her away from the Nervosa related issues. Here most of the student's intake of the food is high but practice time is lesser.
11	Students are allowed to sit and watch the class in the initial three days of a menstrual cycle. Up to four days they can take leave from the Sadhaka class.	What is the relevance of treating menstrual issues during the training hours?	This fact itself is a sign of the authorities' concern about the health of female dancers. Most of the students have an irregular cycle of menstruation. It is quite natural as far as the age of the respondees is concerned. Dancing helps to keep our body mechanism tuned and ordered. Usually menstrual pain is at high during this age.
12	Most of the students are interested in participating seminars, workshops and attending lec. demos.	What is unusual in this?	Students of <i>Kalamandalam</i> have tremendous opportunities to get acquainted with the scholastic and performative world of art. The point is how the students of <i>Kalamandalam</i> have been utilising it. During the course of researcher's time at <i>Kalamandalam</i> , interest of the students towards academic activities and witnessing performances was incredibly low. The gap of these two worlds; scholastic and artistic /performative remained un-bridged. Right from the beginning of the institute, students were part of every event happened there. But no authorities of the institute made sure about the (mental)-participation of the students. No masters ever thought of how the lectures delivered could reach to the students. Now among these present students more than a half is interested towards attending seminars and lecture demos. That marks a drastic change indeed.

13	The dance-percussion-instruments are not used in the class rooms, except for the performance rehearsals and exams.	What is the importance and utility of live instrumental supporting system in the practical class?	It is said that percussion instruments were used in the dance <i>Kalaries</i> earlier. However, since many years it was not part of dance practice rooms of <i>Kalamandalam</i> . This can cause the students to miss their opportunity to learn the musical and the rhythmic nuances of dance directly from the experts.
14	Music class is not addressed in the curriculum of dance students.	What is the necessity of music teaching in the pedagogic system of dance?	The Music class is given to the dance students only once in a week. Music knowledge is necessary for a dance student as far as she / he approaches dance as a complete discipline. Music knowledge is inevitable for making any further practical experimentations in the dance discipline. Survey also points out that music has no importance in the dance examination schedules of the institute.
15	Most of the students are affected with issues like stage fear and social anxiety.	What blocks them to overcome this personality issues? How they can improve?	It is an interesting fact that the stage performers have stage fear oftentimes. But how? The only cause behind this phenomenon could be nothing but the students are not appropriately groomed to be the stage performers by the institute. Not all the students get opportunity for performance inside and outside the institute.
16	Most of the students keep a sort of detached attachment with their Guru.	What is the relevance of <i>Guru Shishya</i> relationship?	According to the Asian traditions of <i>Guru-Shishya Parambara</i> , the detached attachment has prime importance. This detachment is a space of value and respect. If it is happened in the true sense (not out of any hatred feelings), it will eventually compliment the learning space and setting.
17	Most of the students ignore the pain of body injuries during the practice.	What does this habit imply?	Small injuries could be ignored in the class. But if any serious injuries and pain is affected with the students' health, the institute needs to pay more attention and care on the same. It is always good to have a health centre for these physical art institutions and unfortunately this prime institute doesn't have one.
18	Teachers correct the wrong movement takes	Is there any regular method of	This method is not often used by the traditionalistic teachers of the form. Because the physical art requires more

	of students convincingly with much patience.	correction? Which could be the different fruitful methods for correction?	pain from one to achieve the final goal. Taking leave from practice or compromising the practice lessons are common tendencies of a physical art student and most of the time one's body itself demands the same. Thus, what a teacher could do is to be strict to some extent. As in the initial stage the novice's attempts are exactly like swimming against the flow.
19	Most of the students are not hesitant to remind their teachers about her slip of tongue during the class.	How could this act be relevant to the present context?	Earlier it was not like this. The relationship of <i>Guru</i> and <i>Shishya</i> was not this closer. Here, this act of students indicates their closeness and freedom with the teacher. It has two sides of spells. This could be a fear-free relationship in one side. But on the other side it may lack the quality and productivity of the entire thing for what they are there for.
20	No technical devises are being used in the practice room.	Why they don't promote it? What could be the relevance and irrelevance of technical devises in the dance studio?	Technical devises could not be a restricted thing in the campus. Especially in a situation when the education of the whole state is becoming hi-tech. devises could be used as supporting system in the practical class. A high-tech choreography room is actually a necessity for the guilds of dance today. It could enhance the creative mind of the students and it also encourages and makes the students dare enough to produce fruitful collaborations of art.
21	Students get awareness of the theories related to the dance practice from the practical class.	What is unusual in this?	This indicates the growth of the institute in one dimension. Comparing the olden times of the institute the theoretical knowledge among the teachers and students got developed enough even though the practical part of the art form was in trouble.
22	Many of the students expressed that they lack self-confidence, patience and maturity.	What this personality state indicates?	The students join at the institute before their adolescence's age. Especially in case of this institute, the Institute and its ambience have major role in grooming their students. The students at the institute don't really have the access to the outside world. Thus, the students have to be groomed properly under the institution to express their abilities maximum.

Appendix 2D (to refer with chapter 4) Questionnaire prepared for Interviews

[Prepared for initial material collection, to interview Experts for research on the Topic: ‘Dance Pedagogy in Kerala’ as a part of the research work carried out by Aswathy Rajan (13SNPD01), PhD. Scholar, Dept. of Dance, Sarojini Naidu School of Performing Arts and Communication, University of Hyderabad.]

1. In dance curriculum, to what extent does a student get opportunities to develop his / her idea of creation / choreography?

2. As we look into the modern way of interpreting culture, - how much we can adapt it to the curriculum of dance?

3. Dance is the very product of culture, particularly in Kerala. In the socio-political scenario that existed in the last two centuries, the main art forms of Kerala got enriched in the affluent soil of cultural ethos. Could you please share your ideas about how culture stood as a carrier of art training in Kerala?

4. Could you elaborate about the inter-cultural give and takes that have taken place in the genre of dance training in Kerala to this very day? Especially in Kerala *Kalamandalam*?

5. How far the application of *Lakshana Grandhas* has taken place in the dance training of Kerala?

6. When really *Natyasastra* got involved into the main stream of performing art training in India? How its application did take place in Kerala? Particularly in Kerala *Kalamandalam*?

7. Most of the traditionalists stick up to their own rigid manifestos of art. They even don't appreciate watching other forms of art than their own. Experimenting is seen as a heresy. But today's artistes are open to a wide spectrum of trans-cultural practices of dance. They watch a lot of art forms and they are free to adapt it to their own training and practicing systems. Does this paradigm shift of thought, really help to explore new fruitful ways in the area of dance pedagogy?

8. There are two cults of culture, Margi and Desi. All the art forms are consigned to any of these cultural streams. What do you think about the pedagogical systems that existed in both Margi and desi forms?

9. Usually the performance theorists are of the opinion that, pedagogy adapted by the Margi stream of culture had been developed from the desi training system, as all art forms have a desi history to talk about. How particularly these give and takes from desi to margi had taken place?

10. About fourteen art forms are being trained under the school of Kerala *kalamandalam* itself. More or less an internal give and take would have been possible

in between these art forms. How far did this take place particularly from kathakali to *Mohiniyattam*?

11. When so many art forms are trained under the same compartment, is there any possibility of neighbourhood reflections and artistic intakes into pedagogy of the respective art forms?

12. Could you suggest some pedagogical changes required in today's Indian dance scenario?

13. As far as you are concerned, is the use of improved / advanced teaching methods (rather than the usual *Gurukula* training system) and the use of modern technology an advantage in dance teaching?

14. Rabindra Bharathi, Calcutta, Kerala *Kalamandalam*, Kerala and *Kalakshetra*, Chennai are the premier performing art training institute which blossomed and a part of renaissance movement in India. Did the pedagogical tactics, style of presentations and inter disciplinary approaches to dance etc. meet at any point of time and did they share their own ideas and did this make an impact on the face of modern dance movement in India?

15. Talks about the need of a fresh breath in the area of dance literature are in the air, for a while. Many theorists talk about the necessity of contemporary socio-political issues find room in the literature of dance. What according to you is the best possible way to modernize dance literature?

Appendix No. 3- Tables and Lists

Appendix 3A (to refer with chapter 3) Table 1- Swati's 'Varna' Compositions

No.	Varna	Raga	Tala
1	<i>Chapala Sampad</i>	<i>Bhairavi</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
2	<i>Chalamela</i>	<i>Sankarabharanam</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
3	<i>Dani Samajendra Gamini</i>	<i>Thoti</i>	<i>Adi</i>
4	<i>Indumukhi</i>	<i>Sankarabharanam</i>	<i>Ata</i>
5	<i>Jagadeesha</i>	<i>Shudhasaveri</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
6	<i>Mamava</i>	<i>Bhegada</i>	<i>Ata</i>
7	<i>Nadaramiha</i>	<i>Madhyamavathi</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
8	<i>Paramakula</i>	<i>Saurashtra</i>	<i>Rupakam</i>
9	<i>Paalayamaam</i>	<i>Purnachandrika</i>	<i>Ata</i>
10	<i>Sarasijanabha</i>	<i>Atana</i>	<i>Adi</i>
11	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Kamboji</i>	<i>Ata</i>
12	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Mayamalava Goula</i>	<i>Adi</i>
13	<i>Saridisavasa</i>	<i>Thoti</i>	<i>Ata</i>
14	<i>Saturakamini</i>	<i>Kalyani</i>	<i>Adi</i>
15	<i>Sadhuvibhatam</i>	<i>Bhoopalam</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
16	<i>Saparamita Vivasha</i>	<i>Kanada</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
17	<i>Sami Ninne</i>	<i>Yadukula Kambhoji</i>	<i>Adi</i>
18	<i>Sarasamrudupada</i>	<i>Kamboji</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
19	<i>Sarasasaara</i>	<i>Neelambhari</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
20	<i>Sauvarnarusha</i>	<i>Kamas</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
21	<i>Saveriha Thanuja</i>	<i>Saveri</i>	<i>Inknown</i>
22	<i>Sumasayaka</i>	<i>Kapi</i>	<i>Rupaka</i>
23	<i>Vanajaksha</i>	<i>Saveri</i>	<i>Adi</i>

Appendix 3B (to refer with Chapter-4)

Different Approaches of performativity



Erotic and Submissive Approach

- The first picture is a shot from a movement segment of Mohiniyattam, which clearly indicates the expression of intoxication by the body gesture and facial expression of the performer.
- The second one could be either from a movement segment or an abhinaya part. It also indicates the same mannerism.



Devoted and Disciplined

- The facial expression and bodily posture of the first picture implies the qualities such as affection, love and kindness.
- The second picture displays a well-disciplined Nayika of the patriarchal society, as her eyes and eyebrows carry the stress of fear and shyness.



Bold and Fearless

- The posture of Nataraja. The brave attempt Vinitha Nedungadi had committed was the change of costume to the bottom type wear. And in this posture, it is seen she has raised up her leg breaking the conventional rules of Mohiniyattam.
- Roudra rasa and bold character. Even though the roudra rasa had been introduced to the terrain of Mohiniyattam performance long back. Methil Devika bring female characters with vigour and social relevance.



Creative and Innovative

(Emerging patterns in Mohiniyattam dance-technique)

- An emerging movement pattern of Mohiniyattam. Conceptualised and materialised by Vinitha Nedungadi.
- The second picture is of the same manner. These attempts of creating fresh movement patterns could break the invisible norms of conventional prejudices.



Creative and Innovative

- Innovations in the theme and setting of the performance. The first one pictures Neena Prasad. She adapts make up, costume and other embellishments for featuring the character.
- In the second picture, Vijayalaxmi portrays Unni Archa and accordingly she adapted the arrangement of costume and embellishments.



Stylistic Variations

(Stylistic differentiation of the same movement)

- In the first picture, it is seen the wrist of the palm is held straight without any curve or bend.
- In the second picture, the wrist positions in an out-ward bend.

pictures are taken from the public domain.

Appendix 3C (to refer with Chapter-5)

Hand-gestures of *Hastha Lakshana Deepika*



picture is taken from the public domain.

Appendix 3D (to refer with Chapter-4)

Selected list of *Mohiniyattam* Productions

	<i>Productions</i>	<i>Creators</i>
1	<i>Ananda Ganapathi (composed by veteran artist Kavalam Narayana Paniker)</i>	<i>Kanak rele/ Sunanda Nair, Kalamandalam Kshemavathy, Kalamandalam Sugandhi and so on</i>
2	<i>Annamacharya Kirtanas</i>	<i>Kalamandalam Sugandhi</i>
3	<i>Ashta Nayika</i>	<i>Kalamandalam Kshemavati</i>
4	<i>Ashtapadi (First time)</i>	<i>Bharathi Shivaji</i>
5	<i>Ashtarasam-</i>	<i>Kalamandalam Kshemavathy</i>
6	<i>Athira</i>	<i>Bharathi Shivaji</i>
7	<i>Bhajans of Swati Tirunal</i>	<i>Kalamandalam Leelamma</i>
8	<i>Bhasmasuramohini</i>	<i>Kalamandalam chandrika</i>
9	<i>Bhuddha the enlightened one (Dance Drama)</i>	<i>Dr. Kanak Rele</i>
10	<i>Chandrotsavam</i>	<i>Bharathi Shivaji</i>
11	<i>Chintavishtayaya Seetha</i>	<i>Kalamandalam Saraswathy</i>
12	<i>Dasawatharam</i>	<i>Kalamandalam Saraswathy</i>
13	<i>Ganapathy Sthuthi (First time)</i>	<i>Bharathi Shivaji</i>
14	<i>Ganesha stuthi</i>	<i>Kalamandalam Kshemavathy, Smitha Rajan</i>
15	<i>Gazal</i>	<i>Kalamandalam Kshemavathy</i>
16	<i>Kalyani</i>	<i>Dr. Kanak Rele</i>
17	<i>Kanchan Mrig(Dance Drama)</i>	<i>Dr. Kanak Rele</i>
18	<i>Kannaki</i>	<i>Methil Devika</i>
19	<i>Kottichetham</i>	<i>Kala Vijayan</i>
20	<i>Krishna Nee Ene Ariyilla (Malayalam poem of Sugatha Kumari)</i>	<i>Kalamandalam Kshemavathy</i>
21	<i>Malavikagnimitram shloham</i>	<i>Kalamandalam Sugandhi</i>
22	<i>Narayaneeyam Kuchelavrutam</i>	<i>Kalamandalam Kshemavathy</i>
23	<i>Narthana Ganapathy</i>	<i>Kalamandalam Kshemavathy</i>

24	<i>Navarathri Keertanas of Swati Tirunal</i>	<i>Kalamandalam Sugandhi</i>
25	<i>Njanappana</i>	<i>Kala Vijayan</i>
26	<i>Pancha Tantram</i>	<i>Kalamandalam Saraswathy</i>
27	<i>Panthadi Nritta</i>	<i>Kalamandalam Vimala Menon, Nirmala Paniker</i>
28	<i>Pingala</i>	<i>Pallavi Krishnan</i>
29	<i>Rain (Bengali Poetry in Rabindra Sangit)</i>	<i>Vijayalakshmi</i>
30	<i>Ramayanam</i>	<i>Kalamandalam Saraswathy, Kalamandalam Chandrika</i>
31	<i>Ratrimazha</i>	<i>Kalamandalam Kshemavathy</i>
32	<i>Rithurangam</i>	<i>Pallavi Krishnan</i>
33	<i>Ritusamharam</i>	<i>Kalamandalam Saraswathy, Kalamandalam Leelamma</i>
34	<i>Santwani (Dance Drama)</i>	<i>Dr. Kanak Rele</i>
35	<i>Sivaleela</i>	<i>Kalamandalam Saraswathy</i>
36	<i>Suryakathi</i>	<i>Kala Vijayan</i>
37	<i>Swan Lake</i>	<i>Vijayalakshmi</i>
38	<i>Tauryatrikam</i>	<i>Bharathi Shivaji</i>
39	<i>Unni Archa</i>	<i>Vijayalakshmi</i>
40	<i>Ramacharithamanas</i>	<i>Bharathi Shivaji</i>
41	<i>Tatwam</i>	<i>Jayaprabha Menon</i>
42	<i>Gamanam</i>	<i>Jayaprabha Menon</i>
43	<i>Chndrayanam</i>	<i>Jayaprabha Menon</i>
44	<i>Philosophy of Unity</i>	<i>Jayaprabha Menon</i>
45	<i>Laya Lahiri</i>	<i>Jayaprabha Menon</i>
46	<i>Sarpa Tatwam</i>	<i>Methil Devika</i>
47	<i>Bhajagovindam of Adishankara</i>	<i>Jayaprabha Menon</i>
48	<i>Ritu (Seasons)</i>	<i>Jayaprabha Menon</i>
49	<i>Navarasa Ganapathy</i>	<i>Kavalam Narayana Paniker</i>
50	<i>Bhojya Ganapathy</i>	<i>Kvalam Narayana Paniker</i>

Appendix 3E (to refer with Chapter-5, Sub title: Etymology of characteristic *Mohiniyattam Adavus*: A cultural perspective)



pictures are taken from the public domain.

Appendix 3F (to refer with Chapter-5, for movement pattern)



Pictures are taken from the public domain.

Appendix -4

Ente Kalari Ormakal

(Kalari-Memoirs)

With one dawn, my life changed. On 11th of July, 2001, I was adopted to a different family on-which I was not born to. Everything was not the same from then. People, setting, food, dialogues (Lang and parole) and so on everything got changed. And I did not know that it was the moment I started changing or I would say I started transforming my being into a totally different self.

I didn't decide to join there till a smile welcomed me with all love and passion. It was *Leelamma* teacher's query '*Kuttikk ishtalle kalamandalathil cheraan!*' (*Don't you like little girl, to join here!*) shook me up and made me to give a positive gesture. I nodded happily. I became a student of *Kalamandalam*.

First week we didn't get our uniform-sari stitched. We were so much eager to drape that. For me it was a sudden leap from a *kutti pavada* to some matured attire. I was learning everything slowly; to walk, to behave, to talk, to eat, to take bath, to dress up, to wash clothes and what not. Every bit of my action needed a re-correction there. Seniors taught me how to live my life. Dos and don'ts there, were pretty complicated than *Kalari patangal* (*the lessons from Kalari*). The two big challenges in my path at the beginning were *Etiquette* and *modus operandi*.

Terming the body was not that hard as terming the mode of living. But yes it was much painful to open my eyes fully and do all traffic with eyeballs at such a time I rarely saw in my life before. Day starts there at 4 in the morning. I sat in the floor before one of my seniors. She led my eyes through her finger tip. I had to tight the lashes with my fingers in order to pull my eyeballs more out. It was '*Kannu Sadhakam*'. Second in the line was '*Pattusadhakam*', an hour's crawling. I stress it again 'crawling'. No teachers monitored us in that. But we were told often *Pattusadhaka* was a strict praxis earlier. However, none of my seniors could stop me from singing with closed eyes. All five years I got same beating on the lap, only the beaters changed. *Meyyusadhaka* was pretty interesting thing for me. Again, an hours' thing it was, but refreshing. It was an all-inclusive body terming session. I continued

correcting my postures at the mirror side till the final *Sadhaka* I had there. This was an unannounced custom that most of our students kept. The mirror energized and enriched our confidence at each time of visit.

But I, she and everyone there, would go to *Kalari* only with a trembling heart and iced-belly. We cannot presume about any todays. The first severe scolding I got there was in my tenth class and it was on my nails. I had grown them a little. (After that never ever I tried to grow my nails.) But the scolding was for me literally shocking. '*Abhinaya rani*' a term probably I heard for the first time from there. Later I understood that for anything and everything these sorta terms are put in.

Eighth class was so rich and fresh in practice. Everything was new then. Obviously *Preetha teacher* had a crucial role in making our corpus in tune with a systematised dance-culture. She loved, cared and punished us circumstantially. She never stopped classes in between. At a stretch forty and fifty steps in four speeds that was her modes operandi. She didn't allow us to give up we tried and cried at the same time but She kept the same smile all through. Some of us fainted and some of us could not survive it. My class mate *Sofia* left the course for this reason.

Junior *Lathika teacher* was in charge of our second year. Her class was then I felt little tension-free. Her manner of scolding is apparently noncomplex. But I stress it again the slang they use and the punishment they give have major role in shaping the movement culture in the body of the learner. She corrected us in movement pattern and executing *abhinaya* with a satirical tone of tongue. Sometimes we even get embarrassed in front of our fellow students at the time of correction. One of my friends had the tendency to keep the *hastas* just stick to the chest. Teacher advised her many times to keep them little distanced. At last she asked in a satirical way, 'whether you are keeping them for security? If so, you may continue.' This waged a huge laugh in the class but this incident has also been a sort of land marking and collective-correction.

Probably it was in tenth I learned some etiquette that only *Malayali* females use to keep. I felt so much indifference following them. But slowly I got into the mould. I could no more dress up like a girl. I left my favourite midi and tops and took *Uthareeyam* as an eternal part. Even I had to prepare my tongue according to the *Valluvanadan* slang. Mine was a typical Kochi slang. I started un-being myself by

unlearning the learned behaviour. Even though my tenth class was full of swallowing moral etiquette, our teacher helped us to grow more in *abhinaya*. I still can't figure out how we could articulate all the filthy *padams* even without knowing a bit about it. 'Chirichu kazhuthilakkuka' (*Sundaree kandan*) for us *Sringaram* was just that. This teacher is little different. She used to start each of her practical class, sharing some new knowledge about the world. We have no touch with the society as we hardly see television and even news-papers. Hence, maybe she is the only one dance teacher (during our time) who helps us knowing the out-skirts of our world. It might have been a trick of her to get the class switched on in a new air every day.

'Fear' got stick all along into the front lobe of our brain. Fear of Guru made us uncompromising about our studies of dance. Majorly our duty was to transfer the skill bodily according to the dictations given by guru. We were not appreciated to move forward or backward from the frame. Here I would like to bring an idea brought by Dr. Methil Devika. She said in many interviews that the only thing makes her successful in new experimentations in *Mohiniyattam* is her dareness and lack of fear. Fear factor is good at times to get our body tuned to the practice-system during that particular age (especially in adolescence). But if a great measure of it (fear) remains in the brain of dancer in future, it would massively affect her creativity and self-confidence level. 'Ahangaram' was a word we heard aplenty times during the time of our course from many teachers. It was feed directly to our mind after it's massive resonance in Kalari. *Ahangaram* means egoism/ arrogance. Even though, many of these ideas later would obstruct the good flow of creativity of the dancer, it is certainly part and parcel of the traditional setting of classical dance learning.

Transformation of Mohiniyattam Tradition: Cultural-milieu, Pedagogy and Practice

by Aswathy Rajan

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